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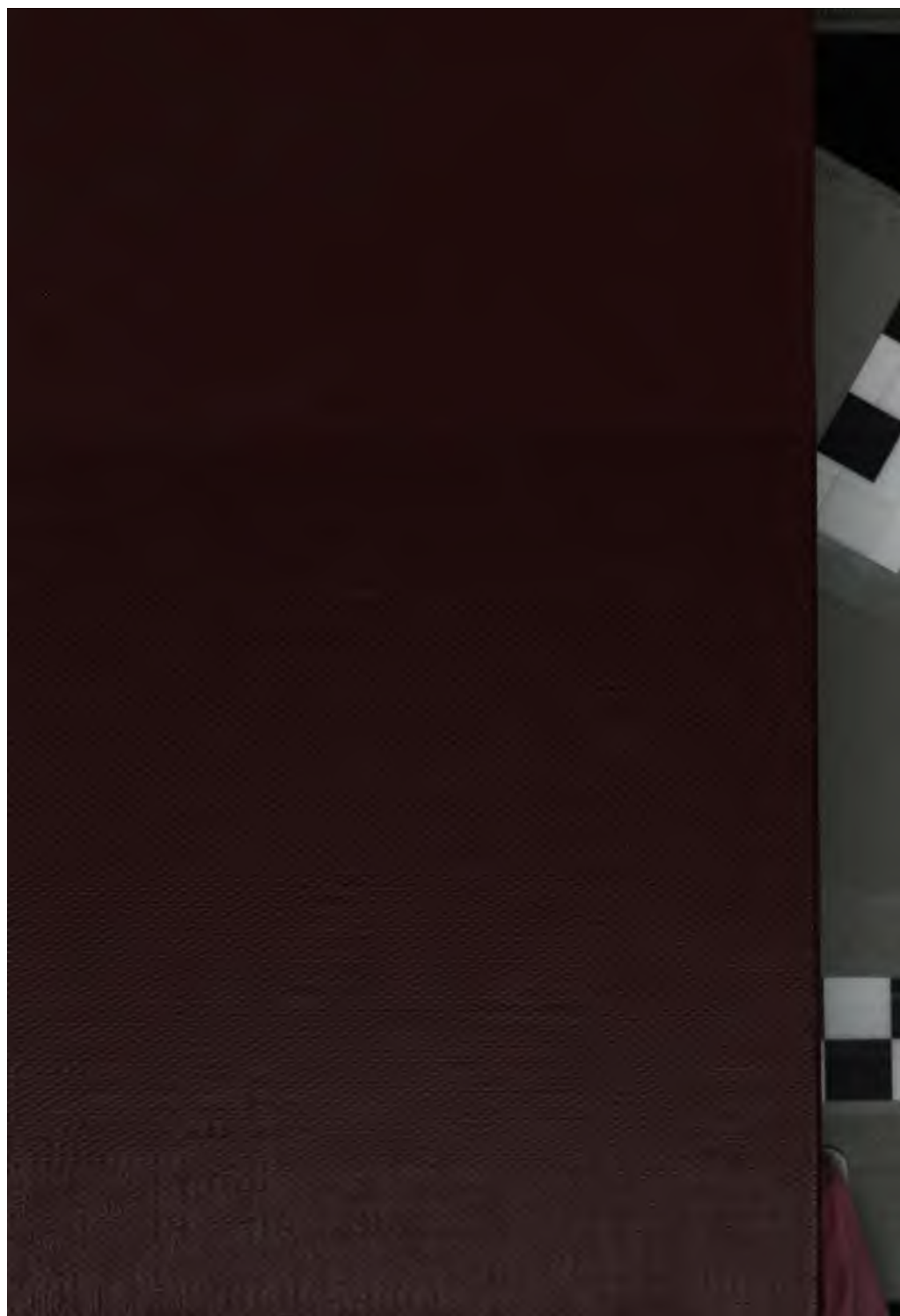
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FROM 1833 TO 1881.

COMPILED BY

FREDERICK J. FURNIVALL.

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INCLUDING

CLASSIFICATION OF BROWNING'S POEMS.

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ON THE POET
OBJECTIVE AND SUBJECTIVE;

ON THE LATTER'S AIM;

ON
SHELLEY AS MAN AND POET.

BY
ROBERT BROWNING.

(BEING A REPRINT OF THE INTRODUCTORY ESSAY TO
[**25** SPURIOUS] "*LETTERS OF PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY*,"

MOXON, 1852.)

SECOND EDITION.

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Browning Society Papers, No. 1.

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FORETALK.

THIS Essay interested me so much when I first read it, that I have got leave from its Writer, and the representatives of its Publisher, whom I thank heartily for their kindness, to reprint it as the first publication of the Browning Society.

The interest lay in the fact, that Browning's "utterances" here are *his*, and not those of any one of the "so many imaginary persons"¹ behind whom he insists on so often hiding himself, and whose necks I, for one, should continually like to wring, whose bodies I would fain kick out of the way, in order to get face to face with the poet himself, and hear his own voice speaking his own thoughts, man to man, soul to soul. Straight speaking, straight hitting, suit me best².

The main subject of the Essay is SHELLEY, his *life, his nature*, work and art. And to any reader of *Pauline* and *Memorabilia*³, it will be no surprise to find (p. 19) that it was the dream of Browning's boyhood to render some signal service to Shelley's fame and memory; while to the student and lover of Shelley, what can be more *worthful than the criticism* and loving tribute of a mind and spirit like Browning's? But it was not the praise or estimate of Shelley that drew me to *this Essay*; it was Browning's statement of his own aim in his own work, *both as objective and subjective poet*, that so interested me, and that makes the Essay a necessity to every student of Browning who would understand him. We now know in what spirit, with what aim our poet, so far as he is subjective, has undertaken his work:—

"He . . . is impelled to embody the thing he perceives, not so much with reference to the one below, as to the One above him, the supreme Intelligence which apprehends all things in their absolute truth. . . . Not what man sees, but what God sees—the *Ideas* of Plato, seeds of creation lying burningly on the Divine Hand—it is toward these that he struggles. Not with the combination of humanity in action, but with the primal elements of humanity, he has to do; and he digs where he stands,—preferring to seek them in his own soul as the nearest reflex of that absolute Mind, according to the intuitions of which he desires to perceive and speak. Such a poet does not deal habitually with the picturesque groupings and tempestuous tossings of the forest-trees, but with their roots and fibres naked to the chalk and stone." (p. 7, below. See too p. 10, at foot.)

¹ See note to "Lyrics" in *Bells and Pomegranates II, Poems, 1849, Poet. Works, 1863, i. 1, &c.*

² The end of *The Ring and the Book* gives the defence of *mask* advances and flank movements:

"Art may tell a truth
Obliquely, so the thing shall breed the thought,
Nor wrong the thought, missing the mediate word."

But if the reader is thick-headed, or can't spare time to study and think a poem out, should not a poet give him a helping hand by a 'mediate word'?

³ See too *Sordello*, Works, 1863, iii. 254-5. My father knew Shelley, attended his wife in 1816, and often told us about him.

Combining these words with those in the Foretalk to the revised text of *Sordello* in 1863,—“my stress lay on the incidents in the development of a soul: little else is worth study. I, at least, always thought so,”—one sees why Browning has, in almost all his works, cold souls up before him for judgment¹, ask them: “Why did you do that deed? What are you in your inmost thought? By what process did you reach your present state of sin, or doubt, or bliss?”—and has, in such words as he could, given their answers to his demands.

One understands too why men repulsive to us,—Ned Bratts, Halbert, Hob, and the like,—attract him. Nothing human is alien to him. Pompilia's mean husband may rightly have twice the space in the *Ring and Book* that the pure wife and mother has herself: his nature is more complex.

And if critics bring against Browning the charge that others have brought against Beethoven and Wagner, that he has stretcht his art to express subjects beyond its range, and in such stretching has made his art cease to be art², we can only answer that we don't think so, and that their sons or grandsons had better wait for the judgment of posterity on the point. Let it be enough for us to follow Browning in getting to the heart and root of every man and thing with whom and which we deal.

F. J. FURNIVALL.

Castell Farm, Beddgelert, North Wales, Aug. 2, 1881.

P.S. The cause of Browning's writing this Essay was (I believe) as follows. In or before 1851, a forger clever enough to take in two publishers, wrote some Letters of Shelley and Byron. Moxon bought the forged Shelley Letters, and John Murray the Byron ones. Before they were proved spurious, Moxon printed the Shelley Letters, and got Browning to write an Introductory Essay to them. Murray was slower, and by the discovery of the forgery was saved the expense and annoyance that Moxon incurred in publishing, and then having to suppress, his book.

The spurious Shelley Letters were, as might have been expected, nugatory, barren of any new revelations of Shelley's character. Browning could naturally make nothing out of them, and therefore wrote his Essay, not on the Letters, but on the two classes of Poets, objective and subjective, and on Shelley. He wanted a chance of writing on the Poet he admired; the Letters gave him the chance; and being told that they were genuine, he accepted them as such without enquiry. Moreover, being in Paris at the time, he had no opportunity of consulting English experts, had even any suspicion of forgery crossed his mind. The worth of his Essay is in no way weakened by its having been set before spurious letters.

The headlines to this Reprint are mine.

¹ Perhaps ‘investigation’ is the better word:—

“Take the least man of all mankind, as I;
Look at his head and heart, find how and why
He differs from his fellows utterly:”

² Third Speaker in the Epilogue to *Dramatis Personæ* (1864), 2nd triplet.

In some of his answers, does not Browning play the part of Sophist, or at least of Advocate? Dramatically he makes the defence a culprit would make himself.

³ I heard Chopin say this of Beethoven, comparing his art with Mozart's perfection. Compare p. 11, l. 12-13, below

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

[DEC. 1851.]

AN opportunity having presented itself for the acquisition of a series of unedited letters by Shelley, all more or less directly supplementary to and illustrative of the collection already published by Mr. Moxon, that gentleman has decided on securing them. They will prove an acceptable addition to a body of correspondence, the value of which towards a right understanding of its author's purpose and work, may be said to exceed that of any similar contribution exhibiting the worldly relations of a poet whose genius has operated by a different law.

Doubtless we accept gladly the biography of an objective poet, as the phrase now goes; (one whose endeavour has been to reproduce things external (whether the phenomena of the scenic universe, or the manifested action of the human heart and brain) with an immediate reference, in every case, to the common eye and apprehension of his fellow men, assumed capable of receiving and profiting by this reproduction. It has been obtained through the poet's double faculty of seeing external objects more clearly, widely, and deeply, than is possible to the average mind, at the same time that he is so acquainted and in sympathy with its narrow comprehension as to be careful to supply it with no other materials than it can combine into an intelligible whole. The auditory of such a poet will include, not only the intelligences which, save for such assistance, would have missed the deeper meaning and enjoyment of the original objects, but also the spirits of a like endowment with his own, who, by means of his abstract, can forthwith pass to the reality it was made from, and either corroborate their impressions of things known already, or supply themselves with new, from whatever shows in the inexhaustible variety of existence may have hitherto escaped their knowledge. (Such a poet is properly the *ποιητής*, the fashioner; and the thing fashioned, his poetry, will of necessity be substantive, projected from himself and distinct.) We are ignorant what the inventor of "Othello" conceived of that fact as he beheld it in completeness, how he accounted for it, under what known law he registered its nature, or to what unknown law he traced its coincidence. We learn only what

he intended we should learn by that particular exercise of his power,—the fact itself,—which, with its infinite significances, each of us receives for the first time as a creation, and is hereafter left to deal with, as, in proportion to his own intelligence, he best may. We are ignorant, and would fain be otherwise.

Doubtless, with respect to such a poet, we covet his biography. We desire to look back upon the process of gathering together in a lifetime, the materials of the work we behold entire; of elaborating, perhaps under difficulty and with hindrance, all that is familiar to our admiration in the apparent facility of success. And the inner impulse of this effort and operation, what induced it? Did a soul's delight in its own extended sphere of vision set it, for the gratification of an insuppressible power, on labour, as other men are set on rest? Or did a sense of duty or of love lead it to communicate its own sensations to mankind? Did an irresistible sympathy with men compel it to bring down and suit its own provision of knowledge and beauty to their narrow scope? Did the personality of such an one stand like an open watch-tower in the midst of the territory it is erected to gaze on, and were the storms and calms, the stars and meteors, its watchman was wont to report of, the habitual variegation of his every-day life, as they glanced across its open roof or lay reflected on its four-square parapet? Or did some sunken and darkened chamber of imagery witness, in the artificial illumination of every storied compartment we are permitted to contemplate, how rare and precious were the outlooks through here and there an embrasure upon a world beyond, and how blankly would have pressed on the artificer the boundary of his daily life, except for the amorous diligence with which he had rendered permanent by art whatever came to diversify the gloom? Still, fraught with instruction and interest as such details undoubtedly are, we can, if needs be, dispense with them. The man passes, the work remains. The work speaks for itself, as we say: and the biography of the worker is no more necessary to an understanding or enjoyment of it, than is a model or anatomy of some tropical tree, to the right tasting of the fruit we are familiar with on the market-stall,—or a geologist's map and stratification, to the prompt recognition of the hill-top, our land-mark of every day.

We turn with stronger needs to the genius of an opposite tendency—the subjective poet of modern classification. He, gifted like the objective poet with the fuller perception of nature and man, is impelled to embody the thing he perceives, not so much with reference to the many below, as to the One above him, the supreme Intelligence which apprehends all things in their absolute truth,—an ultimate view ever aspired to, if but partially attained, by the poet's own soul. Not what

man sees, but what God sees—the *Ideas* of Plato, seeds of creation lying burningly on the Divine Hand—it is toward these that he struggles.) Not with the combination of humanity in action, but with the primal elements of humanity he has to do; and he digs where he stands,—preferring to seek them in his own soul as the nearest reflex of that absolute Mind, according to the intuitions of which he desires to perceive and speak. (Such a poet does not deal habitually with the picturesque groupings and tempestuous tossings of the forest-trees, but with their roots and fibres naked to the chalk and stone. He does not paint pictures and hang them on the walls, but rather carries them on the retina of his own eyes: we must look deep into his human eyes, to see those pictures on them. He is rather a seer, accordingly, than a fashioner, and what he produces will be less a work than an effluence. That effluence cannot be easily considered in abstraction from his personality,—being indeed the very radiance and aroma of his personality, projected from it but not separated.) Therefore, in our approach to the poetry, we necessarily approach the personality of the poet; in apprehending it we apprehend him, and certainly we cannot love it without loving him. Both for love's and for understanding's sake we desire to know him, and as readers of his poetry must be readers of his biography also.

I shall observe, in passing, that it seems not so much from any essential distinction in the faculty of the two poets or in the nature of the objects contemplated by either, as in the more immediate adaptability of these objects to the distinct purpose of each, that the objective poet, in his appeal to the aggregate human mind, chooses to deal with the doings of men, (the result of which dealing, in its pure form, when even description, as suggesting a describer, is dispensed with, is what we call dramatic poetry), (while the subjective poet, whose study has been himself, appealing through himself to the absolute Divine mind, prefers to dwell upon those external scenic appearances which strike out most abundantly and uninterruptedly his inner light and power, selects that silence of the earth and sea in which he can best hear the beating of his individual heart, and leaves the noisy, complex, yet imperfect exhibitions of nature in the manifold experience of man around him, which serve only to distract and suppress the working of his brain. These opposite tendencies of genius will be more readily descried in their artistic effect than in their moral spring and cause. Pushed to an extreme and manifested as a deformity, they will be seen plainest of all in the fault of either artist, when subsidiarily to the human interest of his work his occasional illustrations from scenic nature are introduced as in the earlier works of the originative painters—men and women filling

the foreground with consummate mastery, while mountain, grove and rivulet show like an anticipatory revenge on that succeeding race of landscape-painters whose "figures" disturb the perfection of their earth and sky. It would be idle to inquire, of these two kinds of poetic faculty in operation, which is the higher or even rarer endowment. If the subjective might seem to be the ultimate requirement of every age, the objective, in the strictest state, must still retain its original value. For it is with this world, as starting point and basis alike, that we shall always have to concern ourselves: the world is not to be learned and thrown aside, but reverted to and relearned. The spiritual comprehension may be infinitely subtilised, but the raw material it operates upon, must remain. There may be no end of the poets who communicate to us what they see in an object with reference to their own individuality; what it was before they saw it, in reference to the aggregate human mind, will be as desirable to know as ever. Nor is there any reason why these two modes of poetic faculty may not issue hereafter from the same poet in successive perfect works, examples of which, according to what are now considered the exigences of art, we have hitherto possessed in distinct individuals only. A mere running-in of the one faculty upon the other, is, of course, the ordinary circumstance. Far more rarely it happens that either is found so decidedly prominent and superior, as to be pronounced comparatively pure: while of the perfect shield, with the gold and the silver side set up for all comers to challenge, there has yet been no instance. Either faculty in its eminent state is doubtless conceded by Providence as a best gift to men, according to their especial want. There is a time when the general eye has, so to speak, absorbed its fill of the phenomena around it, whether spiritual or material, and desires rather to learn the exacter significance of what it possesses, than to receive any augmentation of what is possessed. Then is the opportunity for the poet of loftier vision, to lift his fellows, with their half-apprehensions, up to his own sphere, by intensifying the import of details and rounding the universal meaning. The influence of such an achievement will not soon die out. A tribe of successors (Homerides) working more or less in the same spirit, dwell on his discoveries and reinforce his doctrine; till, at unawares, the world is found to be subsisting wholly on the shadow of a reality, on sentiments diluted from passions, on the tradition of a fact, the convention of a moral, the straw of last year's harvest. Then is the imperative call for the appearance of another sort of poet, who shall at once replace this intellectual rumination of food swallowed long ago, by a supply of the fresh and living swathe; getting at new substance by breaking up the assumed wholes into parts of independent and unclassed value, careless of the unknown

laws for recombining them (it will be the business of yet another poet to suggest those hereafter), prodigal of objects for men's outer and not inner sight, shaping for their uses a new and different creation from the last, which it displaces by the right of life over death,—to endure until, in the inevitable process, its very sufficiency to itself shall require, at length, an exposition of its affinity to something higher,—when the positive yet conflicting facts shall again precipitate themselves under a harmonising law, and one more degree will be apparent for a poet to climb in that mighty ladder, of which, however cloud-involved and undefined may glimmer the topmost step, the world dares no longer doubt that its gradations ascend.

Such being the two kinds of artists, it is naturally, as I have shown, with the biography of the subjective poet that we have the deeper concern. Apart from his recorded life altogether, we might fail to determine with satisfactory precision to what class his productions belong, and what amount of praise is assignable to the producer. Certainly, in the face of any conspicuous achievement of genius, philosophy, no less than sympathetic instinct, warrants our belief in a great moral purpose having mainly inspired even where it does not visibly look out of the same. (Greatness in a work suggests an adequate instrumentality; and none of the lower incitements, however they may avail to initiate or even effect many considerable displays of power, simulating the nobler inspiration to which they are mistakenly referred, have been found able, under the ordinary conditions of humanity, to task themselves to the end of so exacting a performance as a poet's complete work.) As soon will the galvanism, that provokes to violent action the muscles of a corpse, induce it to cross the chamber steadily : sooner. The love of displaying power for the display's sake, the love of riches, of distinction, of notoriety,—the desire of a triumph over rivals, and the vanity in the applause of friends,—each and all of such whetted appetites grow intenser by exercise and increasingly sagacious as to the best and readiest means of self-appeasement,—while for any of their ends, whether the money or the pointed finger of the crowd, or the flattery and hate to heart's content, there are cheaper prices to pay, they will all find soon enough, than the bestowment of a life upon a labour, hard, slow, and not sure. (Also, assuming the proper moral aim to have produced a work, there are many and various states of an aim : it may be more intense than clear-sighted, or too easily satisfied with a lower field of activity than a steadier aspiration would reach. All the bad poetry in the world (accounted poetry, that is, by its affinities) will be found to result from some one of the infinite degrees of discrepancy between the attributes of the poet's soul, occasioning a want of

correspondency between his work and the verities of nature,—issuing in poetry, false under whatever form, which shows a thing not as it is to mankind generally, nor as it is to the particular describer, but as it is supposed to be for some unreal neutral mood, midway between both and of value to neither, and living its brief minute simply through the indolence of whoever accepts it, or his incapacity to denounce a cheat.) Although of such depths of failure there can be no question here, we must in every case betake ourselves to the review of a poet's life ere we determine some of the nicer questions concerning his poetry,—more especially if the performance we seek to estimate aright, has been obstructed and cut short of completion by circumstances,—a disastrous youth or a premature death. We may learn from the biography whether his spirit invariably saw and spoke from the last height to which it had attained. An absolute vision is not for this world, but we are permitted a continual approximation to it, every degree of which in the individual, provided it exceed the attainment of the masses, must procure him a clear advantage. Did the poet ever attain to a higher platform than where he rested and exhibited a result? Did he know more than he spoke of?

U concede however, in respect to the subject of our study as well as some few other illustrious examples, that the unmistakeable quality of the verse would be evidence enough, under usual circumstances, not only of the kind and degree of the intellectual but of the moral constitution of Shelley: the whole personality of the poet shining forward from the poems, without much need of going further to seek it.) The "Remains"—produced within a period of ten years, and at a season of life when other men of at all comparable genius have hardly done more than prepare the eye for future sight and the tongue for speech—present us with the complete enginery of a poet, as signal in the excellence of its several adaptitudes as transcendent in the combination of effects,—examples, in fact, of the whole poet's function of beholding with an understanding keenness the universe, nature and man, in their actual state of perfection in imperfection,—of the whole poet's virtue of being untempted by the manifold partial developments of beauty and good on every side, into leaving them the ultimates he found them,—induced by the facility of the gratification of his own sense of those qualities, or by the pleasure of acquiescence in the short-comings of his predecessors in art, and the pain of disturbing their conventionalisms,—the whole poet's virtue, I repeat, of looking higher than any manifestation yet made of both beauty and good, in order to suggest from the utmost actual realisation of the one a corresponding capability in the other, and out of the calm, purity and energy of nature, to reconstitute and store up for the

forthcoming stage of man's being, a gift in repayment of that former gift, in which man's own thought and passion had been lavished by the poet on the else-incompleted magnificence of the sunrise, the else-uninterpreted mystery of the lake,—so drawing out, lifting up, and assimilating this ideal of a future man, thus descried as possible, to the present reality of the poet's soul already arrived at the higher state of development, and still aspirant to elevate and extend itself in conformity with its still-improving perceptions of, no longer the eventual Human, but the actual Divine. In conjunction with which noble and rare powers, came the subordinate power of delivering these attained results to the world in an embodiment of verse more closely answering to and indicative of the process of the informing spirit, (failing as it occasionally does, in art, only to succeed in highest art),—with a diction more adequate to the task in its natural and acquired richness, its material colour and spiritual transparency,—the whole being moved by and suffused with a music at once of the soul and the sense, expressive both of an external might of sincere passion and an internal fitness and consonancy,—than can be attributed to any other writer whose record is among us. Such was the spheric poetical faculty of Shelley, as its own self-sufficing central light, radiating equally through immaturity and accomplishment, through many fragments and occasional completion, reveals it to a competent judgment.

But the acceptance of this truth by the public, has been retarded by certain objections which cast us back on the evidence of biography, even with Shelley's poetry in our hands. Except for the particular character of these objections, indeed, the non-appreciation of his contemporaries would simply class, now that it is over, with a series of experiences which have necessarily happened and needlessly been wondered at, ever since the world began, and concerning which any present anger may well be moderated, no less in justice to our forerunners than in policy to ourselves. For the misapprehensiveness of his age is exactly what a poet is sent to remedy; and the interval between his operation and the generally perceptible effect of it, is no greater, less indeed, than in many other departments of the great human effort. The "E pur si muove" of the astronomer was as bitter a word as any uttered before or since by a poet over his rejected living work, in that depth of conviction which is so like despair.

But in this respect was the experience of Shelley peculiarly unfortunate—that the disbelief in him as a man, even preceded the disbelief in him as a writer; the misconstruction of his moral nature preparing the way for the misappreciation of his intellectual labours. There existed from the beginning,—simultaneous with, indeed anterior to his earliest

noticeable works, and not brought forward to counteract any impression they had succeeded in making,—certain charges against his private character and life, which, if substantiated to their whole breadth, would materially disturb, I do not attempt to deny, our reception and enjoyment of his works, however wonderful the artistic qualities of these. For we are not sufficiently supplied with instances of genius of his order, to be able to pronounce certainly how many of its constituent parts have been tasked and strained to the production of a given lie, and how high and pure a mood of the creative mind may be dramatically simulated as the poet's habitual and exclusive one. The doubts, therefore, arising from such a question, required to be set at rest, as they were effectually, by those early authentic notices of Shelley's career and the corroborative accompaniment of his letters, in which not only the main tenor and principal result of his life, but the purity and beauty of many of the processes which had conduced to them, were made apparent enough for the general reader's purpose,—whoever lightly condemned Shelley first, on the evidence of reviews and gossip, as lightly acquitting him now, on that of memoirs and correspondence. Still, it is advisable to lose no opportunity of strengthening and completing the chain of biographical testimony; much more, of course, for the sake of the poet's original lovers, whose volunteered sacrifice of particular principle in favour of absorbing sympathy we might desire to dispense with, than for the sake of his foolish haters, who have long since diverted upon other objects their obtuseness or malignancy. A full life of Shelley should be written at once, while the materials for it continue in reach; not to minister to the curiosity of the public, but to obliterate the last stain of that false life which was forced on the public's attention before it had any curiosity on the matter,—a biography, composed in harmony with the present general disposition to have faith in him, yet not shrinking from a candid statement of all ambiguous passages, through a reasonable confidence that the most doubtful of them will be found consistent with a belief in the eventual perfection of his character, according to the poor limits of our humanity. Nor will men persist in confounding, any more than God confounds, with genuine infidelity and an atheism of the heart, those passionate, impatient struggles of a boy towards distant truth and love, made in the dark, and ended by one sweep of the natural seas before the full moral sunrise could shine out on him. Crude convictions of boyhood, conveyed in imperfect and inapt forms of speech,—for such things all boys have been pardoned. There are growing-pains, accompanied by temporary distortion, of the soul also. And it would be hard indeed upon this young Titan of genius, murmuring in divine music his human ignorances, through his

very thirst for knowledge, and his rebellion, in mere aspiration to law, if the melody itself substantiated the error, and the tragic cutting short of life perpetuated into sins, such faults as, under happier circumstances, would have been left behind by the consent of the most arrogant moralist, forgotten on the lowest steps of youth.

The responsibility of presenting to the public a biography of Shelley, does not, however lie with me : I have only to make it a little easier by arranging these few supplementary letters, with a recognition of the value of the whole collection. This value I take to consist in a most truthful conformity of the Correspondence, in its limited degree, with the moral and intellectual character of the writer as displayed in the highest manifestations of his genius. Letters and poems are obviously an act of the same mind, produced by the same law, only differing in the application to the individual or collective understanding. Letters and poems may be used indifferently as the basement of our opinion upon the writer's character ; the finished expression of a sentiment in the poems, giving light and significance to the rudiments of the same in the letters, and these, again, in their incipency and unripeness, authenticating the exalted mood and reattaching it to the personality of the writer. The musician speaks on the note he sings with ; there is no change in the scale, as he diminishes the volume into familiar intercourse. There is nothing of that jarring between the man and the author, which has been found so amusing or so melancholy ; no dropping of the tragic mask, as the crowd melts away ; no mean discovery of the real motives of a life's achievement, often, in other lives, laid bare as pitifully as when, at the close of a holiday, we catch sight of the internal lead-pipes and wood-valves, to which, and not to the ostensible conch and dominant Triton of the fountain, we have owed our admired waterwork. No breaking out, in household privacy, of hatred anger and scorn, incongruous with the higher mood and suppressed artistically in the book : no brutal return to self-delighting, when the audience of philanthropic schemes is out of hearing : no indecent stripping off the grander feeling and rule of life as too costly and cumbrous for every-day wear. Whatever Shelley was, he was with an admirable sincerity. It was not always truth that he thought and spoke ; but in the purity of truth he spoke and thought always. Everywhere is apparent his belief in the existence of Good, to which Evil is an accident ; his faithful holding by what he assumed to be the former, going everywhere in company with the tenderest pity for those acting or suffering on the opposite hypothesis. For he was tender, though tenderness is not always the characteristic of very sincere natures ; he was eminently both tender and sincere. And not only do the same affection and yearning

after the well-being of his kind, appear in the letters as in the poems, but they express themselves by the same theories and plans, however crude and unsound. [There is no reservation of a subtler, less costly, more serviceable remedy for his own ill, than he has proposed for the general one; nor does he ever contemplate an object on his own account, from a less elevation than he uses in exhibiting it to the world.] How shall we help believing Shelley to have been, in his ultimate attainment, the splendid spirit of his own best poetry, when we find even his carnal speech to agree faithfully, at faintest as at strongest, with the tone and rhythm of his most oracular utterances? >

For the rest, these new letters are not offered as presenting any new feature of the poet's character. Regarded in themselves, and as the substantive productions of a man, their importance would be slight. But they possess interest beyond their limits, in confirming the evidence just dwelt on, of the poetical mood of Shelley being only the intensification of his habitual mood; the same tongue only speaking, for want of the special excitement to sing. The very first letter, as one instance for all, strikes the key-note of the predominating sentiment of Shelley throughout his whole life—his sympathy with the oppressed. And when we see him at so early an age, casting out, under the influence of such a sympathy, letters and pamphlets on every side, we accept it as the simple exemplification of the sincerity, with which, at the close of his life, he spoke of himself, as—

“One whose heart a stranger's tear might wear
As water-drops the sandy fountain stone;
Who loved and pitied all things, and could moan
For woes which others hear not, and could see
The absent with the glass of phantasy,
And near the poor and trampled sit and weep,
Following the captive to his dungeon deep—
One who was as a nerve o'er which do creep
The else-unfelt oppressions of this earth.”

Such sympathy with his kind was evidently developed in him to an extraordinary and even morbid degree, at a period when the general intellectual powers it was impatient to put in motion, were immature or deficient.

I conjecture, from a review of the various publications of Shelley's youth, that one of the causes of his failure at the outset, was the peculiar *practicalness* of his mind, which was not without a determinate effect on his progress in theorising. An ordinary youth, who turns his attention to similar subjects, discovers falsities, incongruities, and various points for amendment, and, in the natural advance of the purely critical spirit unchecked by considerations of remedy, keeps up before his young eyes so many instances of the same error and wrong, that he finds himself

unawares arrived at the startling conclusion, that all must be changed—or nothing: in the face of which plainly impossible achievement, he is apt (looking perhaps a little more serious by the time he touches at the decisive issue), to feel, either carelessly or considerately, that his own attempting a single piece of service would be worse than useless even, and to refer the whole task to another age and person—safe in proportion to his incapacity. Wanting words to speak, he has never made a fool of himself by speaking. But, in Shelley's case, the early fervour and power to *see*, was accompanied by as precocious a fertility to *contrive*: he endeavoured to realize as he went on idealising; every wrong had simultaneously its remedy, and, out of the strength of his hatred for the former, he took the strength of his confidence in the latter—till suddenly he stood pledged to the defence of a set of miserable little expedients, just as if they represented great principles, and to an attack upon various great principles, really so, without leaving himself time to examine whether, because they were antagonistical to the remedy he had suggested, they must therefore be identical or even essentially connected with the wrong he sought to cure,—playing with blind passion into the hands of his enemies, and dashing at whatever red cloak was held forth to him, as the cause of the fireball he had last been stung with—mistaking Churchdom for Christianity, and for marriage, “the sale of love” and the law of sexual oppression.

Gradually, however, he was leaving behind him this low practical dexterity, unable to keep up with his widening intellectual perception; and, in exact proportion as he did so, his true power strengthened and proved itself. Gradually he was raised above the contemplation of spots and the attempt at effacing them, to the great Abstract Light, and, through the discrepancy of the creation, to the sufficiency of the First Cause. Gradually he was learning that the best way of removing abuses is to stand fast by truth. Truth is one, as they are manifold; and innumerable negative effects are produced by the upholding of one positive principle. I shall say what I think,—had Shelley lived he would have finally ranged himself with the Christians; his very instinct for helping the weaker side (if numbers make strength), his very “hate of hate,” which at first mistranslated itself into delirious Queen Mab notes and the like, would have got clearer-sighted by exercise. The preliminary step to following Christ, is the leaving the dead to bury their dead—not clamouring on his doctrine for an especial solution of difficulties which are referable to the general problem of the universe. Already he had attained to a profession of “a worship to the Spirit of good within, which requires (before it sends that inspiration forth, which impresses its likeness upon all it creates) devoted and disinterested

homage, as *Coleridge says*,"—and Paul likewise. And we find in one of his last exquisite fragments, avowedly a record of one of his own mornings and its experience, as it dawned on him at his soul and body's best in his boat on the Serchio—that as surely as

"The stars burnt out in the pale blue air,
And the thin white moon lay withering there—
Day had kindled the dewy woods,
And the rocks above, and the stream below,
And the vapours in their multitudes,
And the Apennine's shroud of summer snow—
Day had awakened all things that be ;"

just so surely, he tells us (stepping forward from this delicious dance-music, choragus-like, into the grander measure befitting the final enunciation),

"All rose to do the task He set to each,
Who shaped us to his ends and not our own ;
The million rose to learn, and One to teach
What none yet ever knew or can be known."

No more difference than this, from David's pregnant conclusion so long ago !

Meantime, as I call Shelley a moral man, because he was true, simple-hearted, and brave, and because what he acted corresponded to what he knew, so I call him a man of religious mind, because every audacious negative cast up by him against the Divine, was interpenetrated with a mood of reverence and adoration,—and because I find him everywhere taking for granted some of the capital dogmas of Christianity, while most vehemently denying their historical basement. There is such a thing as an efficacious knowledge of and belief in the politics of Junius, or the poetry of Rowley, though a man should at the same time dispute the title of Chatterton to the one, and consider the author of the other, as Byron wittily did, "really, truly, nobody at all."¹ There is even such a thing, we come to learn wonderingly in these very letters, as a profound sensibility and adaptitude for art, while the science of the percipient is so little advanced as to admit of his stronger admiration for Guido (and Carlo Dolce !) than for Michael Angelo. A Divine Being has Himself said, that "a word against the Son of man shall be forgiven

¹ Or, to take our illustrations from the writings of Shelley himself, there is such a thing as admirably appreciating a work by Andrea Verocchio,—and fancifully characterising the Pisan Torre Guelfa by the Ponte a Mare, black against the sunsets,—and consummately painting the islet of San Clemente with its penitentiary for rebellious priests, to the west between Venice and the Lido—while you believe the first to be a fragment of an antique sarcophagus,—the second, Ugolino's Tower of Famine (the vestiges of which should be sought for in the Piazza de' Cavalieri)—and the third (as I convinced myself last summer at Venice), San Servolo with its madhouse—which, far from being "windowless," is as full of windows as a barrack.

to a man," while "a word against the Spirit of God" (implying a general deliberate preference of perceived evil to perceived good) "shall not be forgiven to a man." (Also, in religion, one earnest and unextorted assertion of belief should outweigh, as a matter of testimony, many assertions of unbelief.) The fact that there is a gold-region is established by the finding of one lump, though you miss the vein never so often.

Shelley died before his youth ended. In taking the measure of him as a man, he must be considered on the whole and at his ultimate spiritual stature, and not be judged of at the immaturity and by the mistakes of ten years before: that, indeed, would be to judge of the author of "Julian and Maddalo" by "Zastrozzi." Let the whole truth be told of his worst mistake. I believe, for my own part, that if anything could now shame or grieve Shelley, it would be an attempt to vindicate him at the expense of another.

In forming a judgment, I would, however, press on the reader the simple justice of considering tenderly his constitution of body as well as mind, and how unfavourable it was to the steady symmetries of conventional life; the body, in the torture of incurable disease, refusing to give repose to the bewildered soul, tossing in its hot fever of the fancy,—and the laudanum-bottle making but a perilous and pitiful truce between these two. He was constantly subject to "that state of mind" (I quote his own note to "Hellas") "in which ideas may be supposed to assume the force of sensation, through the confusion of thought with the objects of thought, and excess of passion animating the creations of the imagination:" in other words, he was liable to remarkable delusions and hallucinations. The nocturnal attack in Wales, for instance, was assuredly a delusion; and I venture to express my own conviction, derived from a little attention to the circumstances of either story, that the idea of the enamoured lady following him to Naples, and of the "man in the cloak" who struck him at the Pisan post-office, were equally illusory,—the mere projection, in fact, from himself, of the image of his own love and hate.

"To thirst and find no fill—to wail and wander
With short unsteady steps—to pause and ponder—
To feel the blood run through the veins and tingle
What busy thought and blind sensation mingle,—
To nurse the image of *unfelt caresses*
Till dim imagination just possesses
The half-created shadow"—

of unfelt caresses,—and of unfelt blows as well: to such conditions was his genius subject. It was not at Rome only (where he heard a mystic voice exclaiming, "Cenci, Cenci," in reference to the tragic theme which occupied him at the time),—it was not at Rome only that he

mistook the cry of "old rags." The habit of somnambulism is said to have extended to the very last days of his life.

Let me conclude with a thought of Shelley as a poet. In the hierarchy of creative minds, it is the presence of the highest faculty that gives first rank, in virtue of its kind, not degree ; no pretension of a lower nature, whatever the completeness of development or variety of effect, impeding the precedency of the rarer endowment though only in the germ. The contrary is sometimes maintained ; it is attempted to make the lower gifts (which are potentially included in the higher faculty) of independent value, and equal to some exercise of the special function. For instance, should not a poet possess common sense ? Then the possession of abundant common sense implies a step towards becoming a poet. Yes ; such a step as the lapidary's, when, strong in the fact of carbon entering largely into the composition of the diamond, he heaps up a sack of charcoal in order to compete with the Koh-i-noor. I pass at once, therefore, from Shelley's minor excellencies to his noblest and predominating characteristic.

This I call his simultaneous perception of Power and Love in the absolute, and of Beauty and Good in the concrete, while he throws, from his poet's station between both, swifter, subtler, and more numerous films for the connexion of each with each, than have been thrown by any modern artificer of whom I have knowledge ; proving how, as he says,

"The spirit of the worm within the sod,
In love and worship blends itself with God."

I would rather consider Shelley's poetry as {a sublime fragmentary essay towards a presentment of the correspondency of the universe to Deity} of the natural to the spiritual, and of the actual to the ideal, than I would isolate and separately appraise the worth of many detachable portions which might be acknowledged as utterly perfect in a lower moral point of view, under the mere conditions of art. It would be X easy to take my stand on {successful instances of objectivity in Shelley} : there is the unrivalled "Cenci ;" there is the "Julian and Maddalo" too ; there is the magnificent "Ode to Naples : " why not regard, it may be said, the less organised matter as the radiant elemental foam and solution, out of which would have been evolved, eventually, creations as perfect even as those ? But I prefer to look for the highest attainment, not simply the high,—and, seeing it, I hold by it. There is surely enough of {the work "Shelley"} to be known enduringly among men, and, I believe, to be accepted of God, as human work may ; and around the imperfect proportions of such, the most elaborated productions of ordinary art must arrange themselves as inferior illustrations.

It is because I have long held these opinions in assurance and gratitude, that I catch at the opportunity offered to me of expressing them here; knowing that the alacrity to fulfil an humble office conveys more love than the acceptance of the honour of a higher one, and that better, therefore, than the signal service it was the dream of my boyhood to render to his fame and memory, may be the saying of a few, inadequate words upon these scarcely more important supplementary letters of SHELLEY.

PARIS, Dec. 4th, 1851.

THE BROWNING SOCIETY.

THIS Society is founded to gather together some, at least, of the many admirers of ROBERT BROWNING, for the study and discussion of his works, and the publication of Papers on them, and extracts from works illustrating them. The Society will also encourage the formation of Browning Reading-Clubs, the acting of Browning's dramas by amateur companies, the writing of a Browning Primer, the compilation of a Browning Concordance or Lexicon, and generally the extension of the study and influence of the poet.

Without entering on the vexed question of who is the greatest living poet, Mr. Browning's admirers are content to accept the general verdict that he is both one of the greatest, and *the* most thought-full. They find as his leading note, that which Prof. Spalding declared was Shakspeare's:

"The presence of a spirit of active and inquiring thought through every page of his writings, is too evident to require any proof. It is exerted on every object which comes under his notice; it is serious when its theme is lofty; and when the subject is familiar, it is content to be shrewd. He has impressed no other of his own mental qualities on all his characters; this quality colours every one of them . . . Imagination is active, powerfully and unceasingly, but she is rebuked by the presence of a mightier influence; she is but the handmaid of the active and piercing understanding; and the images which are her offspring serve but as the breeze to the river, which stirs and ripples its surface, but is not the power which impels its water to the sea."—*Letter on the Authorship of the 'Two Noble Kinsmen'*: 1833, p. 20-1. (Reprinted by the New Shakspeare Society.)

That this very fullness of thought in Mr. Browning, with its lightning darts, abrupt transitions, is hard to take in, difficult to follow, is matter of course. That the thought is more worthful to him than its expression, the heart of oak than its bark, has made some men refuse to try and penetrate through the rough covering to the strength beneath. But Æschylus is often obscure; some passages in Shakspeare still puzzle the best critics. Browning's themes are the development of Souls, the analysis of Minds, Art, Religion, Love, the relation of Man and Nature to God, of Man to Man and Woman, the Life past, present, and to come. If on some of these great themes Browning's thoughts have not been easily apprehended, may this not come from want of faithful study, default of deadend minds? At any rate the Browning student will seek the shortcoming in himself rather than in his master. He will wish, by conference with other students, by recourse to older scholars, to learn more of the meaning of the poet's utterances; and then, having gladly learnt, "gladly wol he teche," and bring others under the same influence that has benefited himself. To this end *The Browning Society* has been founded.

The Society will consist of all Subscribers of 21s. a year. It will meet once a month from October to June (except in December) at 8 p.m. on the 4th Friday of every such month at University College, Gower St., W.C., for the hearing and discussion of a Paper or Address on some of Browning's poems or his characteristics. The Society's best Papers, and Reports of its Discussions, will be printed either in full or in a *Monthly Abstract* sent to all members, as funds allow. Till June 23, 1882, the Society will be managed by a Committee of its Founders and Promoters. At that day's Meeting, after the experience of the first Session, the Constitution of the Society will be settled, and its Officers elected for the ensuing year.

The Committee are anxious to add to their number those students of Browning in or out of London who will undertake to get up Browning Reading-Clubs in their respective districts, after the example of Prof. Corson, who has directed one in his University (Cornell) for the last four years.

The Society may not be a large or permanent one. It appeals only to thoughtful men and women willing to study Browning's works. It exists, and will begin its Meetings next autumn. It has promises of some Papers for its first Session, but desires more. Its few present Members hope that some, at least, of the many to whom Browning's works have been a help and strength, will join them in their endeavour to know him better, and bring more minds under his influence.

To remove misunderstandings that have arisen, the Committee state that any one joining the Society is not in any way pledged to indiscriminate admiration of BROWNING, but is only supposed to hold that the poet is profound enough in thought, noble enough in character and feeling, eloquent and interesting enough in expression, to deserve more thorough study, and a far wider circle of readers, than he has yet had. The Committee wish for frankness of expression in all Papers, &c.; and they give notice from the first that every writer in the Society's publications is to be held as speaking for himself or herself alone, without any responsibility whatever on the Committee's part.

Names of persons willing to join the Society should be sent, with or without subscriptions, to F. J. FURNIVALL, 3, St. George's Square, Primrose Hill, London, N.W., or to the *Honorary Secretary* Miss E. H. HICKEY, Clifton House, Pond Street, Hampstead, N.W., or to any Member of the Committee. The Inaugural Meeting of the Society will be held at University Coll., Gower St., W.C., at 8 p.m., on Friday, Oct. 28, 1881, when an Address "On the Characteristics of Browning's Philosophy and Poetry" will be delivered by the Rev. J. Kirkman, M.A.

27 July, 1881.

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DEDICATED

(THO' WITHOUT HIS LEAVE ASKT)

TO

ROBERT BROWNING

"A MAN"

TRUE AS STEEL,

A POET

SEARCHER OF MEN'S MINDS AND SOULS.

F. J. F.

"IN A GONDOLA." THOUGHT AND FORM IN POETRY.

Note for no. 16, "In a Gondola," p. 45. The origin of this poem is shown by a note sent me by Mr. Shepherd:—"DICKENS writes from Alvaro (1844):—"In a certain picture called 'The Serenade,' for which Browning wrote that verse in Lincoln's-inn-fields, you, O Mac, painted a sky." To which his biographer subjoins the verse in a note—

"I send my heart up to thee, all my heart,
In this my singing!
For the stars help me, and the sea bears part;
The very night is clinging
Closer to Venice' streets, to leave one space
Above me, whence thy face
May light my joyous heart to thee, its dwelling-place."—

with the remark:—"Written to express Maclise's subject in the Academy Catalogue."—*Forster's Life of Charles Dickens*, Book Fourth, § iv. Edn. 1876, vol. ii. p. 365.

"I have searched the Royal Academy Catalogues from 1835 to 1847 in vain, either for the title of the picture or the verses."—R. H. S.

The picture—of which Maclise painted the whole, not the sky only—is not mentioned in O'Driscoll's *Memoir of Daniel Maclise, R.A.*, 1871, and cannot have been in the Academy. Browning wrote the stanza impromptu on Forster's report of Maclise's subject, and without seeing the picture. When he saw it, he thought it deserved fuller treatment, and accordingly added the rest of "In a Gondola" to his impromptu stanza.

The reader of Browning should always bear in mind these words of Ruskin, in his *Elements of English Prosody*, 1880, p. 30:—

"The strength of poetry is in its thought, not in its form; and with great lyrics, their music is always secondary, and their substance of saying, primary,—so much so, that they will even daringly and wilfully leave a syllable or two rough, or even mean, and avoid a perfect rhythm, or sweetness, rather than let the reader's mind be drawn away to lean too definitely on sound. . . p. 31: On the other hand, the lower order of singers cast themselves primarily into their song, and are swept away with it, (thinking themselves often finer folks for so losing their legs in the stream,) and are in the end little concerned though there be an extremely minute dash and infusion of meaning in the jingle, so only that the words come tuneably. . . p. 32: While, however, the entire family of poets may thus be divided into higher and lower orders,—the higher always subordinating their song to their saying, and the lower their saying to their song,—it is throughout to be kept in mind that the primal essence of a poet is in his being a singer, and not merely a man of feeling, judgment, or imagination."

Browning has stated in the Epilogue to *Pacchiarotto*, l. 153-4, l. 160, the subjects he has chosen: "Man's thoughts and loves and hates;" "Earth is my vineyard;" "Mine be Man's thoughts, loves, hates." He has declared in his Forewords to the *Sordello* of 1863, that little else than the development of souls is worth study. He believes strongly in God and the Immortality of the Soul. He asks every one, in relation to every pursuit, "How far can *that* project thy soul on its lone way?" (*Rabbi ben Ezra*, st. viii, l. 48). Let those whose ends are the same as his, however different their belief, give the earnest study it deserves, to his "stark strength, Meat for a man" (*Epil. to Pacch.*, st. ii.).

N.B. All Browning's books came out and are in post 8vo, except *Pauline* 1833, in demy 8vo, *Bells and Pomegranates* in royal 8vo, double-columns, and *Dramatis Personæ*, 1864, and the Shelley Essay, in an 8vo between post and demy (?).

FOREWORDS.

No one can well set to work at a man's writings till a list of them is before him, and he knows the order of their publishing. I have therefore got together somewhat hastily the following list of Browning's Works for the use of my Fellow-Members of the Browning Society.

Had I been able to stay longer in Town, the lists would have contained more details, and would have been followed by a note of the chief criticisms on Browning, with short extracts from them. Some of these I had made, but our Committee thought they should be completed—so far as my time will allow—before any were issued. The *Browningiana* are therefore kept back for a while.¹ For additions to the very imperfect list of them in the Appendix I shall be grateful.

In the following pages 'An Alphabetical List of Browning's Works' comes first, because, till Mr. George Smith will advise a Collected Edition of Browning's Works, we sha'n't get one, but we *shall* want a handy reference to the volume in which any Poem we need to look-up appeared. The number before the name of each poem shows whereabouts in Browning's poetic life it was written.² His first Poem, *Pauline*, was published in 1833 before he was 21. His First-Period work ended (I suppose) in 1845 with the last of the *Bells and Pomegranates* (Nos. 1 to 52). His Second Period may include the works of his married life, 1846—1861, that is, *Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day*, 1850; the *Shelley Essay*, 1851-2; *Men and Women*, 1855, &c. (Nos. 53 to 106). Looking at the depth and power of some of the *Dramatis Personæ*, 1864, I propose to put that, with *Hervé Riel*,³ and his greatest work, *The Ring and the Book*, 1868-9 (Nos. 107—127), into his Third Period.

¹ The 'while' may be a long one, as I see now (Aug. 27) that the money wanted for these old criticisms may perhaps be better spent in printing new ones from our Members' point of view.

² In the Collections of the Poems and the Selections from them, the numbers call attention to the difference of date between poems put next to one another. See on p. 63 in *Romances*, (99), (4), (97) . . . (73), (3), (70).

³ *Hervé Riel* was written in 1867, tho not published till 1871. See p. 65, below.

His Fourth Period I begin with *Balaam's* (No. 128) in 1871.¹ Long may it be before that ends! Unless indeed he will close it now, and begin a Fifth Period of mainly *un-dramatic* work, speaking straight out to us in 1882 the message of his three-score years and ten.

That he has much still to say to the world for its behoof, none of us can doubt. And we can only hope that it will come to us in poems of the kind of *Rabbi ben Ezra*, *Proserpine*, *Saul*, *Easter-Eve*,² which have lately cald forth to me such witnesses as these:

1. "I bow down before Mr. Browning because I know that he has made me a better woman than I used to be. I never read his writings without feeling stronger, more earnest, more real, truer to my better self than I was before."

2. "I daily admire him more and more. He doesn't pick out the difficulties and doubts and failures of life, and raise a mighty howl over them, like — and —. He has an intelligible theory of life, which, not shirking the difficulties, scatters them all to the winds; and not blinking the failures, steps across them and over them, ahead to honest, healthy work, and effort and success. I *do* like a man who tells us to be cheery and trust and strive, and use the light we have; instead of the men who are always groaning over the light they think they ought to have and have not, and who let all life be hampered and paralysed by the want. Browning has been more to me for the last two years than all the Sermons. . . . To me he is everything that is strong and out-

¹ The only outside classification of Browning's Poems that I've seen, is in *The Contemporary Review* of Jan. 1867, p. 11:—

'I. Poems dramatic in their structure. [Instances: Paracelsus, Pippa Passes, *Idylls of the King*, a Balcony, and the Plays.]

'II. Lyrics and Romances, dramatic in character though not in structure, and dealing chiefly with passions which have man, as such, for their object. [Specimens: (58) Up at a Villa—Down in the City, (37) The Englishman in Italy, (62) By the Fireside, (12) My last Duchess, (87) Old Pictures in Florence, (82) Andrea del Sarto, (93) The Guardian Angel—a Picture at Fano, (98) Two in the Campagna, (66) A Serenade at the Villa, (63) Any Wife to any Husband, (59) A Woman's last Word, (86) In a Year, (107) James Lee's Wife, (9-11) Cavalier Tunes, (38) The Lost Leader, (99) A Grammarian's Funeral, (30) Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis, (22) The Pied Piper, (23) Flight of the Duchess, (18) Waring.

'III. Poems representing forms, true or false, healthy or morbid, of religious life. [Samples: (4) Johannes Agricola in Meditation, (97) The Heretic's Tragedy, (80) Bishop Blougram's Apology, (121) Mr. Sludge the Medium, (115) Caliban upon Setebos, (114) A Death in the Desert, (108) A Legend of Pome, (64) An Epistle of Karshish, (48) Saul, (122) Apparent Failure, (113) Rabbi ben Ezra, (123) The Epilogue to *Dramatis Personæ*, (53) Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day.]

But I am not satisfied with this classification,—as many of III might fairly be claimed for II, and some of II for III,—tho I do not know the Poems well enough to propose a better scheme. The reviewer says of Browning's own classification of his shorter poems under 'Lyrics,' 'Romances,' 'Men and Women,' it "does not seem to us a very felicitous one. The Romances and Lyrics might change place almost *ad libitum*, and every one of them might legitimately come under the last title," Men and Women.

² Tho men like Mr. James Thomson and myself don't care for the special Christian or doctrinal side of Browning's work, we can yet feel the worth of his teaching as a man and thinker, and admire his imaginative power, his strength and subtlety.

spoken, and healthy and Christian, without a taint of "goodyism"; and the reason I like his view of life better than any one else's is, that he lumps time and eternity together, and works them as a whole, instead of separating the two and working the first alone, which, if there is an Eternity, as I doubt not there is, *must* be a mistaken starting-point. Whether man has 70 years, or "man has For Ever," must make an entire difference in the whole dealing with life; but most religious people divide time and eternity into two in a manner that Browning certainly doesn't."

These writers know who is right: Browning, who said, in 1851, that Poets should strive to see things as God sees them, and tell men how that is; Arnold, who said, later, that Poetry is a criticism of Life; or Jingle, who says that 'the object of Poetry is to please'; and, so long as he gets his lines musical and his rymes right, is content to let thought be out of them or in, base or poor, as the whim takes him.

Well, after the Alphabetical List comes the Chronological one, of the Works in their order of time. Its few notes from contemporary sources are mainly due to Mr. Shepherd and Mr. Carson, diligent collectors of Browning scraps. Any sent to me hereafter shall be printed in a Supplement. The great variety of Browning's metres I am not able to describe properly, but the schemes of his rymes, and the number of measures in his lines, I have noted. The words 'iambic,' 'dactylic,' &c., occasionally include their opposites as well as their equivalents. Very little collation of the different texts of the Poems have I made.¹ Reprints from stereotype-plates I have not notist as separate editions. The 4 volumes of *Selections*, and the first Trial-List of Criticisms on Browning, are shunted into an Appendix, with the ryme-changed² and fresh lines in the revized *Sordello* of 1863, Books V and VI of which our Member, the Rev. T. W. Carson of Dublin has kindly done for me.

As the Society will have hardly any money for printing Papers this year, I shall give it this 'Bibliography' and the Reprint of Browning's

¹ Only by rymes, *The King*, *Porphyria*, *Johannes Agricola*, *The Boy and Angel*, *Saul*, Part I, *James Lee*, *Gold Hair*, and *Sordello*. More collation is needed. A writer says in 1869: "it would only be necessary to take up an early work of the author and trace it through the editions from first to last, to find that he [R. B.] frequently revises [see (7') *The King*, and (31) *The Boy and Angel*, below]—touching out slight blemishes, and amending here and there obscure places. Nor does this remark apply to early works only: it is evidently the habit of the poet to touch and retouch his poems. Many of the *Men and Women* have been very considerably altered since their publication in 1855; and in the *Dramatis Personæ*, published in 1864, several important changes were made when a second edition was printed the same year: last year again, some of the poems were altered and beautified, and this not only in minor details—a section of *James Lee's Wife*, for instance, being greatly amplified and improved [see (107) below]."—*London Quarterly Review*, July 1869, vol. xxxii, p. 326-7, note. The same note says "a selection from Shelley's poetry, announced by Messrs. Moxon some years ago as forthcoming with a preface by Browning, has never made its appearance."

² Many lines, whose rymes are unchanged, are altered in their earlier parts.

Shelley Essay. Will any one else give it—or help to give it—one or both of the next two working issues that it wants, *A Subject-Index to Browning's Works*, and a short Statement of the Story and Purpose of each of those Works?¹ The latter *can* stand over till the *Browning Primer* is written, but would be of very great use if it could be prepared and printed within three months. Till the number of the Society's Members is multiplied by ten, those of them who can spare any money will have to ask themselves whether they care only a guinea a year for BROWNING or not; and if they feel they care more, they should act on their conviction. There is much to be done before all the needful helps are provided for the study of this manliest and thoughtfulest of our modern English poets whom we are united to honour.

For help in the present Bibliography, I thank Mr. Richard Garnett, Mr. Austin Dobson, Mr. J. T. Nettleship,² Miss E. H. Hickey,³ Mr. W. G. Stone,⁴ Prof. Johnson,⁵ Prof. Corson, Mr. F. G. Stephens,⁶ Mr. Kirkman, and other friends. My special thanks are due to the Rev. T. W. Carson of Dublin, for his numerous *ana*, and collating *Sordello*, Bks. V and VI, also to Mr. Richard Herne Shepherd, the well-known Bibliographer of Ruskin, Tennyson, &c., for the copy of *Karshook*, the notes on *Pauline*, *Hervé Riel*, the notice of *Balaustion*, for looking thro my proofs, and adding the many *Ana* and bits of information to which "S" is put. Above all I have to acknowledge the kindness of Robert Browning himself, for answering such questions as I felt free to ask him, and for his leave to reprint his *Karshook*, p. 56, below. But it will of course be understood that he is in no way bound by any statement or opinion of mine.

F. J. FURNIVALL.

*Castell Farm, Beddgelert, North Wales, July 31, 1881;
and 3 St. George's Sq., N. W., Oct. 1.*

P.S. The counting of the lines of the poems before 1863 has been done in the edition of the *Works* in 1863 or in that of 1868. The whole number of Browning's lines I reckon at 93,323. Shakspeare has unrymed lines among the couplets in his plays, as Browning has in his poems.

¹ The latter, Mr. Nettleship has kindly undertaken to make. The former, I hope to get volunteers and an Editor for, among our Members.

² He has counted the lines of *Pauline*, *Fifine*, *Inn-Album*.

³ She has counted *La Saisiaz*, *Croisic*, and *Dramatic Idyls* i and ii, and added some metrical details.

⁴ He has counted *Pippa Passes* and *Strafford*.

⁵ He has counted *Aristophanes' Apology*, *Agamemnon*, and *Hohenstiel-Schwangau*.

⁶ He gave me the *Orpheus* and *Deaf and Dumb* references.

AN ALPHABETICAL LIST
OF
ROBERT BROWNING'S WORKS,

WITH THEIR ORDER-NUMBERS AND DATES OF PUBLICATION.

("A," "An," "Le," and "The" are not reckoned as initial words. An acute accent to a number, as 151', means that its poem is part of the Work 151. The Prologue and Epilogue to a single Work, are taken as part of it; those to a set of Poems, as separate works.)

A				
No.	Title.	Date.	Book.	Page.
112	Abt Vogler	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.</i> ,	67
84	After	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii.	19
152	THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS	1877		
7'	"All Service ranks the same with God" is Pippa's New-Year's Hymn, in (7) "Pippa Passes," <i>Works</i> , 1863, iii. 8, 67.			
130'	Amphibian (A Butterfly at Sea) <i>is the</i> Prologue to (130) 'Fifine at the Fair'	1872		
82	Andrea del Sarto	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii.	1
101	Another Way of Love	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii.	220
63	Any Wife to any Husband	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	81
122	Apparent Failure	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.</i> ,	239
154'	Apparitions (in 'Selections,' 1880, p. 3) <i>is the</i> Poem to the 'Two Poets of Croisic'			
145	Appearances	1876	<i>Pacchiarotto</i> ,	10
132	ARISTOPHANES' APOLOGY, <i>including</i> THE LAST ADVENTURE OF BALAUSTION	1875		
17	Artemis prologuizes (<i>after</i> , prologizes)	1842	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , III.	
136	At the Mermaid	1876	<i>Pacchiarotto</i> ,	47
B				
128	BALAUSTION'S ADVENTURE	1871		
132	BALAUSTION, THE LAST ADVENTURE OF	1875	<i>Aristophanes' Apol.</i>	
83	Before	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii.	15
	BELLS AND POMEGRANATES: "			
7	I. Pippa Passes	1841		
8	II. King Victor and King Charles	1842		
9-22	III. Dramatic Lyrics	1842		
23	IV. The Return of the Druses	1843		
24	V. A Blot in the Scutcheon	1843		
25	VI. Colombe's Birthday	1844		

No.	Title.	Date.	Book.	Pa
34-50	VII. Dramatic Romances and Lyrics ...	1845		
51,52	VIII. Luria, and A Soul's Tragedy ...	1845		
105	Ben Karahook's Wisdom	1856	<i>Keepsake,</i>	
143	Bifurcation	1876	<i>Pacchiarotto,</i>	
80	Bishop Blougram's Apology	1855	<i>Men & Women, i.</i>	2
32	The Bishop orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's (<i>first</i> , The Tomb at St. Praxed's, <i>q. v.</i>)	1845	<i>Hood's Mag., iii.</i>	2
24	A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON	1843	<i>Bells & Pom., V.</i>	
11	"Boot and Saddle:" <i>cald before</i> , "My Wife Gertrude" (Cavalier Tunes, III)	1842	<i>Bells & Pom., III.</i>	
31	The Boy and the Angel (6 fresh stanzas for 1 old, are in <i>Bells</i> , VII)	1844	<i>Hood's Mag., ii.</i>	1
62	By the Fireside	1855	<i>Men & Women, i.</i>	
110	Le Byron de nos Jours; Dis aliter Visum, or,	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.,</i>	

C

115	Caliban upon Setebos, or Natural Theology in the Island	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.,</i>	1
14	Camp and Cloister: I. Camp (French), <i>cald later</i> , "Incident of the French Camp" ...	1842	<i>Bells & Pom., III.</i>	
9-11	Cavalier Tunes: I. Marching Along; II. Kent- ish Sir Byng; III. My Wife Gertrude (<i>cald later</i> , "Boot and Saddle")	1842	<i>Bells & Pom., III.</i>	
149	Cenciája	1876	<i>Pacchiarotto,</i>	10
70	"Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came"	1855	<i>Men & Women, i.</i>	10
53	CHRISTMAS-EVE AND EASTER-DAY	1850		
27	Claret (Claret and Tokay, I); <i>after, cald</i> "Na- tionality in Drinks," I	1844	<i>Hood's Mag., i.</i>	50
94	Cleon	1855	<i>Men & Women, ii.</i>	10
164	Clive	1880	<i>Dram. Idyls, II.</i>	
15	Cloister (Spanish); <i>later</i> , "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister"	1842	<i>Bells & Pom., III.</i>	
25	COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY	1844	<i>Bells & Pom., VI.</i>	
43	The Confessional	1845	<i>Bells & Pom., VII.</i>	
116	Confessions	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.,</i>	1
13	Count Gismond.—Aix in Provence. (<i>before</i> , Italy and France, II)	1842	<i>Bells & Pom., III.</i>	
20	Cristina: (Queen-Worship, II)	1842	<i>Bells & Pom., III.</i>	
154	Croisic, the Two Poets of	1878	<i>La Saisiaz,</i>	

D

125	Deaf and Dumb (Woolner's statue-group) ...	1868	<i>Poet. Works, vi.</i>	1
114	A Death in the Desert	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.,</i>	
89	"De Gustibus"	1855	<i>Men & Women, ii.</i>	1
110	Dis aliter Visum; or, Le Byron de nos Jours	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.,</i>	
167	Doctor —	1880	<i>Dram. Idyls, II.</i>	1
	DRAMATIC IDYLS [First Series]: Nos. 156-160	1879		
	DRAMATIC IDYLS, Second Series: Nos. 161-168	1880		
	DRAMATIC LYRICS: Nos. 9 to 22	1842	<i>Bells & Pom., III.</i>	
	DRAMATIC ROMANCES AND LYRICS: Nos. 34-50	1845	<i>Bells & Pom., VII.</i>	
	DRAMATIS PERSONÆ: Nos. 107 to 123 ...	1864		

E

No.	Title.	Date.	Book.	Page.
44	Earth's Immortalities	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	19
163	Echetlos	1880	<i>Dram. Idyls</i> , II.	1
	(Elizabeth Barrett Browning: <i>see</i> (104) One Word More; (118) <i>Prospice</i> ; (126) <i>The Ring and the Book</i> , I. 1391-1416, "O lyric Love", and Bk. iv end; (128) <i>Balaustion's Adventure</i> , p. iv, 168; (130) <i>Prol. and Epilogue to Ffine</i> , ? and the wife, § 38; (134) <i>Prol. to Pacchiarotto</i> , p. 2, and (151) <i>Epilogue to it.</i>)			
37	England in Italy; <i>later</i> , "The Englishman in Italy"	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	5
123	<i>Epilogue</i> : First, Second, and Third Speakers	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.</i> ,	245
151	<i>Epilogue</i> to 'Pacchiarotto,' &c. "The poets pour us wine" (quoted from E. B. Browning)	1876	<i>Pacchiarotto</i> ,	223
169	<i>Epilogue</i> to <i>Dramatic Idyls</i> , II. "Touch him ne'er so lightly"	1880		
64	An Epistle concerning the strange Medical Experience of <i>Karshish</i> , the Arab Physician	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	90
124	<i>Euridice</i> to <i>Orpheus</i> . A Picture by Leighton (<i>in Works</i> 1868): <i>first</i> "Orpheus and Euridice"	1864	<i>Royal Acad. Catal.</i> , 13	
128	<i>Euripides</i> , a Transcript from [<i>his Alkestis</i>]: "Balaustion's Adventure"	1871		
132	<i>Euripides</i> , a Transcript from [<i>his Herakles Mai-nomenos</i>]: 'The last Adventure of Balaustion'	1875	<i>Aristoph. Apol.</i> ,	209
155	<i>Euripides</i> : 2 stanzas from his <i>Hippolytus</i> eng-lisht: "Oh Love, Love"	1879	<i>Mahaffy's Euripid.</i> ,	116
57	<i>Evelyn Hope</i>	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	19

F

119	A Face	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.</i> ,	116
141	Fears and Scruples	1876	<i>Pacchiarotto</i> ,	83
130	FINE AT THE FAIR	1872		
150	Filippo Baldinucci on the Privilege of Burial	1876	<i>Pacchiarotto</i> ,	184
33a	The Flight of the Duchess. Part I. 9 sections	1845	<i>Hood's Mag.</i> , iii.	513
33b	The Flight of the Duchess. (Part I and) Part II, § 10-19	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	13
29	The Flower's Name (<i>Garden-Fancies</i> , I)	1844	<i>Hood's Mag.</i> , ii.	45
148	A Forgiveness	1876	<i>Pacchiarotto</i> ,	131
60	Fra Lippo Lippi	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	35
13	France (Italy and France, II); <i>later</i> , "Count Gismond"	1842	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , III.	
	France and Spain: <i>see</i> (26) <i>The Laboratory</i> , and (43) <i>The Confessional</i>		<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	11

G

29	Garden - Fancies: 1. The Flower's Name;			
30	2. Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis	1844	<i>Hood's Mag.</i> , ii.	45
15	Garden-Fancies: 3. <i>in Works</i> , 1863, is 'Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister.'			
10	Give a Rouse (<i>Cavalier Tunes</i> , II)	1842	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , III.	

No.	Title.	Date.	Book.	Pp.
7'	"Give her but a least excuse to love me" is Pippa's song in (7) "Pippa Passes," <i>Works</i> , 1863, iii. 36.			
50	The Glove	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	
108	Gold Hair: a Legend of Pornic (has 3 fresh stanzas in <i>Poet. Works</i> , 1868, vi. 62-9) ...	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.</i> ,	
153'	"Good to forgive," 'Pisgah-Sights,' III, in <i>Selections</i> , 1880, is the Proem to 'La Saisiaz.'			
99	A Grammarian's Funeral	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii. 2	
93	The Guardian-Angel: a Picture at Fano ...	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii. 1	
H				
158	Halbert and Hob	1879	<i>Dram. Idyls</i> ,	4
2'	"Heap cassia, sandal-buds and stripes" is the 2nd song in (2) "Paracelsus," IV. 191-206; <i>Works</i> , 1863, iii. 101.			
133'	Herakles: the last Adventure of Balaustion. Part of "Aristophanes' Apology" ...	1875		
41	"Here's to Nelson's Memory" ('Beer:' see 'Home-Thoughts from Abroad').			
97	The Heretic's Tragedy	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii. 1	
127	Hervé Riel	1871	<i>Cornh. Mag.</i> 1871, 2	
129	HOHENSTIEL-SCHWANGAU, PRINCE ...	1871		
92	Holy-Cross Day	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii. 1	
40-2	Home Thoughts from Abroad: I. Oh to be in England. II. Here's to Nelson's Memory (<i>later</i> , "Nationality in Drinks," III, Beer). III. Nobly Cape St. Vincent	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	
136	House	1876	<i>Pacchiarotto</i> ,	
130'	The Householder, is the Epilogue to "Fifine at the Fair"	1872		
76	How it strikes a Contemporary	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i. 1	
84	"How they brought the good News from Ghent to Aix"	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	
I				
7'	"I am a painter who cannot paint" is Lutwyche's speech in "Pippa Passes," II; <i>Works</i> , 1863, iii. 33-5.			
88	IN A BALCONY (in 3 Parts)	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii. 4	
16	In a Gondola	1842	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , III.	
86	In a Year	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii. 2	
14	Incident of the French Camp; <i>before</i> , "Camp and Cloister," I.	1842	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , III.	
133	THE INN ALBUM	1875		
85	In three Days	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii. 2	
68	Instans Tyrannus	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i. 12	
54	Introductory Essay to [25 Spurious] "Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley"	1852		
12	Italy and France. I. Italy (<i>later</i> , "My last Duchess—Ferrara")	1842	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , III.	

No.	Title.	Date.	Book.	Page.
36	Italy in England; after, "The Italian in England"	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	4
159	Ivàn Ivànovitch	1879	<i>Dram. Idyls</i> , I.	57
J				
107	James Lee: in 1868 cald "James Lee's Wife," with 2 fresh sections: see p. 64 here ...	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.</i> ,	3
4	Johannes Agricola (later: Johannes Agricola in Meditation)	1836	<i>Monthly Reposit.</i> , x.	45
K				
64	Karshish, the Arab Physician, an Epistle concerning his strange Experiences (of Lazarus)	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	90
105	Karshook's Wisdom: see Ben	1856	<i>Keepsake</i> ,	16
10	"Kentish Sir Byng" (Cavalier Tunes, II)	1842	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , III.	
7	The King: "A King lived long ago" made, later, Pippa's song in (7) "Pippa Passes," III. i; <i>Works</i> , 1863, iii. 49	1835	<i>Monthly Repos.</i> , ix.	707
8	KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES	1842	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , II.	
L				
153	LA SAISIAZ [& 154] THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC	1878		
26	The Laboratory (<i>Ancien Régime</i>)	1844	<i>Hood's Mag.</i> , i.	513
77	The Last Ride together	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	184
64	(Lazarus after his Resurrection: see 'An Epistle' or 'Karshish')	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	90
75	Life in a Love	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	175
72	A Light Woman	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	151
120	A Likeness	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.</i> ,	165
2'	"Lost, lost! yet come," is Song 1 in (2) "Paracelsus," II. 297-339; <i>Works</i> , 1863, iii. 42.			
38	The Lost Leader	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	8
39	The Lost Mistress	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	8
55	Love among the Ruins	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	1
74	Love in a Life	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	173
56	A Lovers' Quarrel	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	17
51	LURIA	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VIII.	1
M				
4, 3	Madhouse Cells (1. Johannes Agricola; 2. Porphyria's Lover, q. v. <i>Bells</i> , 1842).			
143	Magical Nature	1876	<i>Pacchiarotto</i> ,	90
9	"Marching Along" (Cavalier Tunes, I)	1842	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , III.	
156	Martin Relph	1879	<i>Dram. Idyls</i> , I.	1
79	Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	194
106	May and Death	1857	<i>Keepsake</i> ,	164
46	Meeting at Night (1863: in 1845, "Night")	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	20
81	Memorabilia (on seeing Shelley)	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	259
	MEN AND WOMEN: Nos. 55 to 104	1855		
65	Mesmerism	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	107
104	Misconceptions	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii.	227
121	M[iste]r Sludge the Medium	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.</i> ,	171
47	Morning (: in 1863, "Parting at Morning")	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	20

No.	Title.	Date.	Book.	Page.
165	Mulékkeh	1880	<i>Dram. Idyls</i> , II.	43
12	My last Duchess—Ferrara (<i>before</i> , Italy and France. I. Italy)	1842	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , III.	
67	My Star	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	122
11	My Wife Gertrude (Cavalier Tunes, III : <i>later</i> , "Boot and Saddle")	1842	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , III.	

N

Nationality in Drinks : <i>see</i> (27) Claret, (28) Tokay, (41) 'Here's to Nelson's Memory.'				
142	Natural Magic	1876	<i>Pacchiarotto</i> ,	88
115	Natural Theology in the Island ; Caliban on Setebos, or,	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.</i> ,	123
45	"Nay but you who do not love her : " Song	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	19
161	Ned Bratts	1879	<i>Dram. Idyls</i> , I.	107
46, 47	Night and Morning. I. Night (in 1863, "Meeting at Night") ; II. Morning (in 1863, "Parting at Morning")	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	20
42	"Nobly [nobly 1863] Cape St. Vincent" (Home-Thoughts from Abroad, III ; <i>later</i> , II)	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	8
145	Numpholeptos	1876	<i>Pacchiarotto</i> ,	95

O

135	Of Pacchiarotto, and how he worked in Distemper	1876		
155	"Oh Love, Love" : 2 stanzas of Euripides' <i>Hippolytus</i> enlisht	1879	<i>Mahaffy's Euripid.</i> ,	116
40	"Oh to be in England" (Home-Thoughts from Abroad, I)	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	8
87	Old Pictures in Florence	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii.	30
100	One Way of Love (<i>cald</i> 'Song' in Selections, 1865, p. 87)	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii.	218
104	One Word more (to E. B. B.)	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii.	229
124	Orpheus and Eurydice (Lines for Leighton's picture thus <i>cald</i>) : <i>after</i> , 'Eurydice to Orpheus' 2' "Over the sea our galleys went" is the 3rd Song in (2) "Paracelsus," Part IV. 451-523 ; <i>Works</i> , 1863, iii. 110-113.	1864	<i>R. Academy Catal.</i> ,	13
7'	"Overhead the tree-tops meet" is Song 4 in "Pippa Passes," IV ; <i>Works</i> , 1863, iii. 62.			

P

PACCHIAROTTO, AND HOW HE WORKED IN DISTEMPER : Nos. 134-151 (<i>see</i> Of) ...				
168	Pan and Luna	1880	<i>Dram. Idyls</i> , II.	137
2	PARACELSUS	1835		
47	Parting at Morning, 1863 (in 1845, "Morning," II of "Night and Morning") ...	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	20
78	The Patriot	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	191
1	PAULINE	1833		
157	Pheidippides	1879	<i>Dram. Idyls</i> , I.	27
35	Pictor Ignotus. Florence, 15—	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	4
22	The Pied Piper of Hamelin	1842	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , III.	

No.	Title.	Date.	Book.	Page:
166	Pietro of Abano	1880	<i>Dram. Idyls</i> , II.	61
7	PIPPA PASSES	1841	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , I.	
40-1	Pisgah-Sights, 1, 2	1876	<i>Pacchiarotto</i> ,	75
153	Pisgah-Sights, 3, in <i>Selections</i> , 1880, p. 350, is ‘Good to forgive,’ the Proem to ‘La Saisiaz.’			
	POEMS: Nos. 2 to 50 (less some: see p. 79)	1849		
	POETICAL WORKS, 1863, 3 vols. (see p. 57-9)			
	POETICAL WORKS, 1868, 6 vols. (see p. 62-4)			
151	“The poets pour us wine.” Epilogue ...	1876	<i>Pacchiarotto</i> ,	223
96	Popularity	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii.	193
108	Pornic: Gold Hair, a Legend of,	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.</i> ,	27
	3 Porphyria (<i>later</i> , “Porphyria’s Lover”) ...	1836	<i>Monthly Reposit.</i> , x.	83
69	A Pretty Woman	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	128
129	PRINCE HOHENSTIEL-SCHWANGAU. Saviour of Society	1871		
134	Prologue to “Pacchiarotto,” &c., calld “A Wall” in ‘Selections,’ 1880	1876		
162	Proem to “Dramatic Idyls.” Second Series, ‘You are sick’	1880		
118	Prospice	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.</i> ,	149
91	Protus	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii.	154
Q				
19-20	Queen-Worship. I. Rudel; II. Cristina	1842	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , III.	
R				
113	Rabbi ben-Ezra	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.</i> ,	77
131	RED COTTON NIGHT-CAP COUNTRY, or Turf and Towers	1873		
71	Respectability	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	149
23	THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES	1843	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , IV.	
126	THE RING AND THE BOOK, 4 vols: i & ii in 1868; iii & iv in 1869	1868		
19	Rudel & ¹ [to, in 1849] the Lady of Tripoli	1842	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , III.	
S				
114	(St. John’s Death in the Desert: see ‘A Death.’)			
147	St. Martin’s Summer	1876	<i>Pacchiarotto</i> ,	108
153	LA SAISIAZ [& 154] THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC	1878		
48a	Saul, Part I, § 1-9	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	21
48b	„ Part II, § 10-19 (with Part I)	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii.	111
	* Selections from the Poetical Works of Robert Browning [by J. Forster and B. W. Procter]	1863		
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66	A Serenade at the Villa	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	117

* For the Contents of these *Selections*, see Appendix, pp. 73-80, below.

No.	Title.	Date.	Book.	Page.
	(Shakspeare: <i>see</i> 'At the Mermaid,' 'House,' st. 10; Sludge.)			
	(Shelley: <i>see</i> Pauline, Sordello, Introductory Essay, Memorabilia, Cenciaja.)			
138	Shop	1876	<i>Pacchiarotto</i> ,	64
30	Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis (Garden-Fancies, 2)	1844	<i>Hood's Mag.</i> , ii.	46
121	Sludge, Mr., the Medium	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.</i> ,	171
15	Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister (<i>before</i> , Camp and Cloister, II)	1842	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , III.	
45	Song: "Nay but you who do not love her"	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	19
100	Song. ("One Way of Love," <i>Men & Women</i> , ii. 213, is cald 'Song' in <i>Selections</i> , 1865, p. 87.)			
6	SORDELLO	1840		
52	A SOUL'S TRAGEDY	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VIII.	23
73	The Statue and the Bust	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , I.	156
5	STRAFFORD	1837		
T				
21	Through the Metidja to Abd-el-Kadr ...	1842	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , III.	
2	"Thus the Mayne glideth" is the 4th Song in (2) "Paracelsus," Part V. 419-447; vol. iii. p. 135-6, <i>Works</i> , 1863.			
49	Time's Revenges	1845	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , VII.	22
61	A Toccata of Galuppi's	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	56
28	Tokay (Claret and Tokay, II; <i>after</i> , Nation- ality in Drinks, II)	1844	<i>Hood's Mag.</i> , i.	525
82	The Tomb at St. Praxed's (Rome, 15—); <i>after</i> , "The Bishop orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's"	1845	<i>Hood's Mag.</i> , iii.	237
111	Too Late	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.</i> ,	57
169	"Touch him ne'er so lightly"	1880	<i>Dram. Idyls</i> , II.	149
102	Transcendentalism	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii.	223
160	Tray	1879	<i>Dram. Idyls</i> ,	101
95	The Twins	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii.	190
98	Two in the Campagna	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii.	205
154	THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC	1878	<i>La Saisiaz</i> ,	87
V				
58	Up at a Villa—Down in the City	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	23
W				
134	A Wall (<i>is the</i> Prologue to "Pacchiarotto," &c.)	1876		
18	Waring	1842	<i>Bells & Pom.</i> , III.	
59	A Woman's last Word	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , i.	31
90	Women and Roses	1855	<i>Men & Women</i> , ii.	150
109	The Worst of it	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.</i> ,	37
Y				
7	"The Year's at the spring" is Pippa's first Song in (7) "Pippa Passes," I; <i>Works</i> , 1863, iii. 18.			
162	"You are sick"	1880	<i>Dram. Idyls</i> , II.	vii
118	Youth and Art	1864	<i>Dram. Pers.</i> ,	153

A LIST OF ROBERT BROWNING'S WORKS

IN THE ORDER OF THEIR PUBLICATION.

"Of all living poets, we are dealing with the profoundest thinker."

1868. Jn. T. Nettleship. *Introd. to Essays on Robert Browning's Poetry*, p. 11.

[**B**rowning was born at Camberwell on May 7, 1812, went to the Rev. Thos. Ready's school at Peckham till he was near 14, then had a private tutor at home, and attended some lectures at the London University, now University College, London.]

1833. **PAULINE**; a Fragment of a Confession.

1

Plus ne suis ce que j'ai été,
Et ne le saurois jamais être.—MAROT.

London: Saunders and Otley, Conduit Street. 1833. p. 1-71. Poem dated, at end, p. 71, 'Richmond, October 22, 1832.' Extract from *H. Cor. Agrippa, De Occult. Phil.* given as Forewords, dated *London, January, 1833. V. A. XX.* Blank verse. 1030 lines. (See note 1, p. 40-1, below.) Reprinted for the first time in vol. i. of the 6-vol. edition of the *Poetical Works*, 1868, with the following Forewords:

"The poems that follow are printed [more or less] in the order of their publication. The first piece in the series [*Pauline*] I acknowledge and retain with extreme repugnance, indeed purely of necessity; for not long ago I inspected one, and am certified of the existence of other transcripts, intended sooner or later to be published abroad: by forestalling these, I can at least correct some misprints (no syllable is changed) and introduce a boyish work by an exculpatory word. The thing was my earliest attempt at 'poetry always dramatic in principle, and so many utterances of so many imaginary persons, not mine,' which I have since written according to a scheme less extravagant, and scale less impracticable, than were ventured upon in this crude preliminary sketch—a sketch that, on reviewal, appears not altogether wide of some hint of the characteristic features of that particular *dramatis persona* it would fain have reproduced: good draughtmanship, however, and right handling were far beyond the artist at that time.

R. B.

London, December 25, 1867.'

Mr. R. H. Shepherd writes :—"On the fly-leaf of a copy of the original edition of *Pauline*, formerly in my possession, was the following note in the author's handwriting :—

"*Pauline*—written in pursuance of a foolish plan I forget, "or have no wish to remember ; involving the assumption of "several distinct characters : the world was never to guess that "such an opera, such a comedy, such a speech proceeded from "the same notable person. Mr. V. A. (see page second) was "Poet of the party, and predestined to cut no inconsiderable "figure. 'Only this crab' (I find set down in my copy) "remains of the shapely Tree of Life in my fools' Paradise.'
 "(I cannot muster resolution to deal with the printers' blunders after the American fashion, and bid people 'for "jocularity" read "synthesis" ' to the end of the chapter.)

"Dec. 14, 1838."

[In 1834, Browning spent some time in Russia.]

1835. **PARACELsus.** By Robert Browning. London. Published by Effingham Wilson, Royal Exchange. MDCCCXXXV. p. i-xi, 1-216, post 8vo. 'Inscribed to the Comte A. de Ripart-Monclar.' Blank verse and songs, 4152 lines.¹ Time 1507-1541. In 5 Parts. I. Paracelsus aspires, 1507, p. 1-41 ; II. Paracelsus attains, 1521, p. 42-71 ; III. Paracelsus, 1526, p. 72-123 ; IV. Paracelsus aspires, 1528, p. 124-156 ; V. Paracelsus attains, 1541, p. 157-200. Note 201-216. Songs, mainly 4-measure : 1. "Lost, lost ! yet come," II. 297-339, iii. 42, ed. 1863 ; 2. "Heap cassia, sandal-buds and stripes" (2 stanzas of 8 four-measure lines each, *ababbccc*), IV. 191-206, iii. 101 ; 3. "Over the sea our galleys went," IV. 451-523, iii. 110-113 ; 4. "Thus the Mayne glideth," V. 419-447, in couplets, iii. 135. Forewords : not reprinted :—

"I am anxious that the reader should not, at the very outset,—mistaking my performance for one of a class with which it has nothing in common,—judge it by principles on which it has never been moulded, and subject it to a standard to which it was never meant to conform. I therefore anticipate his discovery, that it is an attempt, probably more novel than happy, to reverse the method usually adopted by writers whose aim it is to set forth any phenomenon of the mind or the passions, by the operation of persons and events ; and that, instead of having recourse to an external machinery of incidents to create and evolve the crisis I desire to produce, I have ventured to display somewhat minutely the mood itself in its rise and progress, and have suffered the agency by which

¹ Part I, 832 lines ; II, 661 ; III, 1055 ; IV, 695 ; V, 909 : in all, 4152 lines. The lines are counted from the *Works*, 1863.

it is influenced and determined, to be generally discernible in its effects alone, and subordinate throughout, if not altogether excluded: and this for a reason. I have endeavoured to write a poem, not a drama: the canons of the drama are well known, and I cannot but think that, inasmuch as they have immediate regard to stage representation, the peculiar advantages they hold out are really such, only so long as the purpose for which they were at first instituted is kept in view. I do not very well understand what is called a Dramatic Poem, wherein all those restrictions only submitted to on account of compensating good in the original scheme are scrupulously retained, as though for some special fitness in themselves,—and all new facilities placed at an author's disposal by the vehicle he selects, as pertinaciously rejected. It is certain, however, that a work like mine depends more immediately on the intelligence and sympathy of the reader for its success;—indeed, were my scenes stars, it must be his co-operating fancy which, supplying all chasms, shall connect the scattered lights into one constellation—a Lyre or a Crown. I trust for his indulgence towards a poem which had not been imagined six months ago; and that even should he think slightly of the present (an experiment I am in no case likely to repeat) he will not be prejudiced against other productions which may follow in a more popular, and perhaps less difficult form.

15th March, 1835."

[*Paracelsus*¹ is the 1st piece in *Poems*, 2 vols, 1849; and in vol. iii. of *Poetical Works*, 3 vols, 1863; the 2nd piece in vol. i of *Poetical Works*, 6 vols, 1868 (p. 43-205).]

1835. **The King**: "A king lived long ago." 54 iambic lines in fours
7' (abab, abba, and aaaa), couplets, 3 singles, and a five. As
(really 3) this Poem was in 1841 made Pippa's song in scene i. Act III.
of *Pippa Passes* (and I've only just found it, Sept. 24, on my
first day's work after 2 months in N. Wales), I give it Pippa's
number (7),—as 107' its (next page), to avoid altering all my
later numbers. Six lines were added,² and others altered, in 1841.

¹ The original manuscripts of Browning's *Paracelsus* and *Christmas Eve and Easter Day* are in the Forster Collection at South Kensington.—S.

1835	1841
Swarthy and shameless—beggar-cheat 22 [a single, or unrhymed line]	beggar-cheat 22 <i>Sometimes there clung about his feet</i> 25 <i>With bleeding lip and burning cheek</i> <i>A woman, bitterest wrong to speak</i> <i>Of one with sullen, thickset brows:</i>
Sometimes from out the prison-house 25	Sometimes from out the prison-house 29
* * * * *	* * * * *
But which the God's self granted him 50 For setting free each felon limb Faded because of murder done [single]	But which the God's self granted him 54 For setting free each felon limb Because of <i>earthly</i> murder done 56 Faded till other hope was none;—

1836. **Porphyria**: "The rain set early in to-night:" 60 four-measure
 3 iambic lines in 12 fives, *ababb*. (Not altered up to 1868, but
 cald "Porphyria's Lover" in 1863, *Works*, i. 310-12; and in
 1868, iv. 299. § VI of (107) *James Lee* was written in 1835
 or 1836.)

4 **Johannes Agricola**. "There's Heaven above: and night by
 night." 60 four-measure iambic lines in 12 fives: *ababb*.
 Line 42, "With unexhausted blessedness," altered in 1842,
Bells, III, p. 13, to "By unexhausted power to bless." Title
 also altered in 1863 (*Works*, i. 284) to "Johannes Agricola in
 Meditation." (See in 1825, Lord Dillon's *Eccelino*.—R. G.)

1836. **Lines**. "Still ailing, wind? wilt be appeased or no?" 6 stanzas
 107' of 5, *ababa*,—*a* 1, *a* 2 and *b* being 5-measure, *b* 2 four-measure,
 (really 6) and *a* 3 three-measure: 30 iambic lines. This poem, revized,
 was in 1864 reprinted in *Dramatis Personæ* as the first 6 stanzas
 of § VI of (107) "James Lee": see p. 59 and 60, *n.*, below.

These four poems (7', 3, 4, 107') are in *The Monthly
 Repository*, edited by W. J. Fox¹ (London: Charles Fox, 67

1835	1841
Seeing this he did not dare	Seeing this, he did not dare
	<i>Approach that threshold in the sun,</i>
Assault the old King smiling there. 54	Assault the old king smiling there. 60

The edition of 1863, *Works*, iii. 50, cuts out lines 54-57 of the 1841 version,
 and for lines 58-60 has

"Beholding this, he did not dare
 Approach that threshold in the sun,
 Assault the old king smiling there.
Such grace had kings when the world begun!"

For smaller changes, compare

1835	1841, 1863
Age with its <i>pine</i> so sure gone by 11	Age with its <i>dane</i> so sure gone by 11
(<i>As though</i> gods loved him while he dreamed)	(The Gods so loved him while he dreamed)
No need <i>that</i> he should ever die 14	No need <i>the king</i> should ever die. 14
Spy-prowler or <i>some</i> pirate found 23	Spy-prowler or <i>rough</i> [1863, <i>some</i> 1841] pirate found 23
Sometimes from <i>out</i> the prison-house 25	[1863 only] <i>And</i> sometimes from the prison-house
Who through some <i>nook</i> . . . 26	Who through some <i>chink</i>
Knees and elbows . . . 27	[1863 only] <i>On</i> knees and elbows
<i>He was</i> by the very God. 29	[1863 only] <i>At last there</i> by the very God
These, all and every one 33	<i>And</i> these, all and every one
<i>Old</i> councillors 35	<i>His</i> councillors
A python <i>swept</i> the streets one day 39	[1841] A python <i>passed</i> one day
The silent streets—until he came 40	The silent streets—until he came [1863] 'Tis said, a Python <i>scared</i> one day The <i>breathless city</i> , till he came
Where the old king judged alway 42	[1863 only] Where the old king <i>sat</i> to judge alway
But when he saw the <i>silver</i> hair 43	But when he saw the <i>sweepy</i> hair
<i>That</i> the god will 45	[1841] The God will . . . [1863] <i>Which</i> the God

¹ Mr. Fox was the first noticer of Browning's boyish poems before he and the
 poet had met. Then they met once or twice. After some years Pauline was

Paternoster Row; and William Tait, Edinburgh). *The King* is in vol. ix, New Series, p. 707-8; *Porphyria* and *Johannes Agricola* are in vol. x, p. 43-6, and the *Lines* in x, p. 270-1. All four are signed 'Z.' After the heading "*Johannes Agricola*," vol. x, p. 45, is—

"ANTINOMIANS, so denominated for rejecting the Law as a thing of no use under the Gospel dispensation: they say, that good works do not further, nor evil works hinder salvation; that the child of God cannot sin, that God never chastiseth him, that murder, drunkenness, &c. are sins in the wicked but not in him, that the child of grace being once assured of salvation, afterwards never doubteth . . . that God doth not love any man for his holiness, that sanctification is no evidence of justification, &c. Pontanus, in his Catalogue of Heresies, says John Agricola was the author of this sect, A.D. 1535."—*Dictionary of all Religions*, 1704.

'Porphyria' and 'Johannes Agricola,' transposed, are called 'Madhouse Cells,' I, II, in 1842, *Bells and Pomegranates*, III, where they were first reprinted: see p. 45, below.

1837. **STRAFFORD**: an historical Tragedy. By Robert Browning, Author of "Paracelsus." London: Printed for Longman, Rees, Orme, Brown, Green, and Longman, Paternoster Row. 1837. 8vo, p. i-vi, 1-131. Dedicated to William C. Macready, April 23, 1837. Preface, p. iii, iv. Dramatis Personæ¹ (Theatre-Royal, Covent Garden, May 1, 1837), p. vi (also, "Nearly ready. *Sordello*, in six Books. By the Author of 'Paracelsus.'"). In 5 Acts. Blank verse. Act I, sc. i, 266 lines; ii, 297 lines; Act II, sc. i, 115 lines; sc. ii, 296 lines; Act III, sc. i, 62 lines; ii, 236 lines; iii, 97 lines; Act IV, sc. i, 141 lines; ii, 196 lines; iii, 103 lines; Act V, sc. i, 41 lines; ii, 350 lines: in all, 2200 lines.

PREFACE.

"I had for some time been engaged in a Poem of a very different nature, when induced to make the present attempt; and am not without apprehension that my eagerness to freshen a jaded mind by diverting it to the healthy natures of a grand

reviewed generously by Mr. Fox in 1833, and three years after, Browning sent him two poems for his *Repository*. Fox's review says: "The work before us . . . has truth and life in it, . . . gave us the thrill, and laid hold of us with the power, the sensation of which has never yet failed us as a test of genius. Whoever the anonymous author may be, he is a poet. . . . We felt certain of Tennyson . . . we are not less certain of the author of *Pauline*. . . . The whole composition is of the spirit, spiritual. The scenery is in the chambers of thought; the agencies are powers and passions; the events are transitions from one state of spiritual existence to another. And yet the composition is not dreamy; there is on it a deep stamp of reality."

¹ 'Lady Percy, Countess of Carlisle—Helen Faucit, now Lady (Theodore) Martin.' On Macready's production of *Strafford* and *The Blot in the Scutcheon*, see his *Reminiscences*, &c., 1875.

epoch, may have operated unfavourably on the represented play, which is one of Action in Character, rather than Character in Action. To remedy this, in some degree, considerable curtailment will be necessary, and, in a few instances, the supplying details not required, I suppose, by the mere reader. While a trifling success would much gratify, failure will not wholly discourage me from another effort: experience is to come; and earnest endeavour may yet remove many disadvantages.

"The portraits are, I think, faithful; and I am exceedingly fortunate in being able, in proof of this, to refer to the subtle and eloquent exposition of the characters of Eliot and Strafford, in the Lives of Eminent British Statesmen now in the course of publication in Lardner's Cyclopædia, by a writer [John Forster] whom I am proud to call my friend; and whose biographies of Hampden, Pym, and Vane, will, I am sure, fitly illustrate the present year—the Second Centenary of the Trial concerning Ship-Money. My Carlisle, however, is purely imaginary: I at first sketched her singular likeness roughly in, as suggested by Matthew and the memoir-writers—but it was too artificial, and the substituted outline is exclusively from Voiture and Waller.

"The Italian boat-song in the last scene is from Redi's *Bacco*, long since naturalized in the joyous and delicate version of Leigh Hunt."

[Strafford was reprinted (without the Preface) in the *Poetical Works*, 1863, 3 vols, where it's the last piece in vol. ii, p. 503-605; and in the *Poetical Works*, 1868, 6 vols, where it's the 3rd and last piece in vol. i, p. 207-310.]

1840. **SORDELLO.** | By Robert Browning. | London: | Edward Moxon,
6 Dover Street. | MDCCCXL. | post 8vo, p. i-iv, 1-253. In
6 Books. 5-measure iambic couplet-ryme.

Reprinted (and revis'd) in *Poetical Works*, 3 vols, 1863: it's the 3rd and last piece in vol. iii, p. 251-465, where it has the following Dedication or Forewords (whose italics are mine) and fresh head-lines:—

"To J. MILSAND, OF DIJON.

"Dear Friend,—Let the next poem be introduced by your name, and so repay all trouble it ever cost me. I wrote it twenty-five years ago¹ for only a few, counting even in these on somewhat more care about its subject than they really had. My own faults of expression were many; but with care for a man or book, such would be surmounted, and without it what avails the faultlessness of either? I blame nobody, least of all myself, who did my best then and since; for I lately gave

¹ That is, in round numbers; really 23 years: the poem is dated and was written in 1840.

time and pains to turn my work¹ into what the many might,—instead of what the few must,—like : but after all, I imagined another thing at first, and therefore leave as I find it. The historical decoration was purposely of no more importance than a background requires ; and *my stress lay on the incidents in the development of a soul : little else is worth study. I, at least, always thought so*—you, with many known and unknown to me, think so—others may one day think so : and whether my attempt remain for them or not, I trust, though away and past it, to continue ever yours.
R. B."

London, June 9, 1863.

In the 1863 edition, *Sordello* has 5981 lines : Book I, 1000 lines ; Bk. II, 1016 ; Bk. III, 1022 ; Bk. IV, 1031 ; Bk. V, 1026 ; Bk. VI, 886 lines. The odd line in Bk. IV is l. 281, the last in p. 370. *Sordello* was also reprinted (with Dedication) in *Poetical Works*, 6 vols, 1868, where it's the 1st piece in vol. ii, p. 1-217.

1841-6. **BELLS AND POMEGRANATES.**² (8 nos. : All in yellow paper covers.)

1841. No. I.—**PIPPA PASSES.** By Robert Browning, Author of "Paracelsus." London : Edward Moxon, Dover Street. MDCCCXLI. Royal 8vo, 2 cols, p. 1-16. P. 2 is 'Advertisement,' and Dedication to Serjeant Talfourd. Price 6*d.* sewed. Blank verse mainly, with 7 songs,³ and prose. Proem—couplets, triplets, fours, fives, a 6, 7, and 8 ; 1-, 2-, 3-, 4-, 5-, and 6-measure,—iambic (214 lines). I. Morning (i. 282 lines ; ii. prose, 161 lines). II. Noon (i. 327 lines ; ii. prose, 83 lines). III. Evening (i. 229 lines ; ii. 91 lines). IV. Night (prose and a song, 221 lines). Epilogue—couplets, triplets, fours, fives, sixes, sevens, and an eight ; 2-, 3-, 4-, and 5-measure, iambs, with trochees, anapests, and amphibrachs (114 lines). In all, 1722 lines.

¹ See in the Appendix, notes of all the fresh and rhyme-changed lines of the poem in the revised edition. But very many other lines were altered, tho' their old rhymes were kept.

² On this title, see below, p. 51.

³ 1. "All service ranks the same with God," 2 stanzas of 6, *aa, bb, cc*, 4-measure iambs, in Proem, lines 190-201 ; 2. A 2-measure anapestic triplet, "Let the watching lids wink ;" and 3. Pippa's 2-measure song, "The Year's at the spring," 8 lines, iambs and anapests, *abcd, abcd*, in Act I, sc. i ; 4. (besides Lutwyche's 4-measure letter, "I am a painter who cannot paint," 52 lines, in iambs, anapests, and dactyls) Pippa's trochaic song, "Give her but a least excuse to love me," 2 stanzas of 9, *ababa, cdcd*—trochees, anapests, iambs—in Act II, sc. i ; 5. Pippa's song, "A King lived long ago," in fours, couplets, triplets, a five and a single, 57 iambic and anapestic lines, 3- and 4-measure (in scene i), with 6. (in scene ii) the Second Girl's Song, "You'll love me yet ! and I can tarry," 3 verses of 4, *abab, a* 4-measure, *b* 3-, 12 iambic lines, in Act III ; 7. "Overhead the tree-tops meet," a seven, *aa bb cc d*, and nine, *eee ff gg hh*, 4-measure, 3-, and 5-, trochees, iambs, and anapests, at the end of Act IV. The Epilogue ends with the 1st, 5th (slightly altered), and 6th lines of Pippa's first Song, "All service." For Song 5, "A King," see 7', p. 39, above.

ADVERTISEMENT [*not reprinted in any later edition*].

"Two or three years ago I wrote a Play, about which the chief matter I much care to recollect at present is, that a Pit-full of good-natured people applauded it: ever since, I have been desirous of doing something in the same way that should better reward their attention. What follows, I mean for the first of a series of Dramatical Pieces, to come out at intervals; and I amuse myself by fancying that the cheap mode in which they appear, will for once help me to a sort of Pit-audience again. Of course such a work must go on no longer than it is liked; and to provide against a too certain and but too possible contingency, let me hasten to say now—what, if I were sure of success, I would try to say circumstantially enough at the close—that(*) I dedicate my best intentions most admiringly to the Author of 'Ion'—most affectionately to Sergeant Talfourd.

ROBERT BROWNING."

[Reprinted in *Poems* (2 vols.), 1849, i. 163-230, with Dedication, from(*) above; in *Poetical Works* (3 vols.), 1863, ii. 1-67; in *Poetical Works* (6 vols.), 1868, vol. ii, p. 219-287.]

1842.

BELLS AND POMEGRANATES.

- 8 No. II.—**KING VICTOR AND KING CHARLES.** [1730-1.] By Robert Browning, author of "Paracelsus." London: Edward Moxon, Dover Street. MDCCCXLII. p. 1-20. 'Advertisement' (as reprinted in 1863, 1868), p. 2 (claiming that the Author's view of Victor is truer than any prior one, and excusing himself from producing his evidence). Price 1s. sewed. Blank verse. Time 1730. First year, 1730. King Victor; Part I (542 lines), Part II (313 lines). Second year, 1731. King Charles; Part I (408 lines), Part II (362 lines). In all, 1625 lines.

1842.

BELLS AND POMEGRANATES.

- No. III.—**DRAMATIC LYRICS.** By Robert Browning. Author of "Paracelsus." London: Edward Moxon, Dover Street. MDCCCXLII. p. 1-16. Price 1s. On p. 2 "Advertisement. Such Poems as the following come properly enough, I suppose, under the head of 'Dramatic Pieces'; being, though for the most part Lyric in expression, always Dramatic in principle, and so many utterances of so many imaginary persons, not mine.—R. B."

(1842)

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- 9 **Cavalier Tunes. I. Marching Along.** "Kentish Sir Byng," &c. 4 stanzas of 6 (2 couplets, and burden-couplet): 4-measure; 2 and 3 syllables to a measure. 24 lines. p. 3
- 10 II. **Give a Rouse.** "King Charles," &c. (3 stanzas: burden of 4, *aaab*; *a*, 3-measure, *b* 1-; and 2 verses of 4, *cada*, 3-measure, with burden). 20 lines; amphibrachs and dactyls. p. 3
- 11 III. **My Wife Gertrude:** "Boot, saddle, to horse, and away" (4 quatrains in -ay), cald later 'Boot and Saddle.' 4-measure. 16 lines; dactyls, amphibrachs, &c. p. 3

- 12 **Italy and France. I. Italy:** "That's my last Duchess." 56 lines in iambic couplet-ryme. [In 1863 call'd 'My last Duchess.—Ferrara.'] p. 4
- 13 **II. France:** "Christ God" (21 four-measure stanzas of 6, *abacc*). [Afterwards (1863) call'd "*Count Gismond*.—Aix in Provence."] 126 iambic lines. p. 4
- 14 **Camp and Cloister. I. Camp (French).** "You know we French stormed Ratisbon" (5 stanzas of 8, *abab, cdcd*; *a, c*, 4-measure; *b, d*, 3-measure). [Afterwards (1863) call'd "Incident of the French Camp."] 40 iambic lines. p. 5
- 15 **II. Cloister (Spanish).** "Gr-r-r—there go," &c. (9 four-measure stanzas of 8, *abab, cdcd*). [In 1863 put as "Garden Fancies," III, vol. i, p. 18-21: "Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister."] 72 trochaic lines. p. 6
- 16 **In a Gondola.** "I send my heart all up to thee" (15 sections). 233 lines in stanzas of 5, 6, 7, 8, and in alternates, triplets, and couplets; in 5-measure, 4-, 3-, and 2-: iambic. Songs in trochees, anapaests, and iambs. This poem was suggested by a picture of Maclise's: see p. 24, above. p. 7
- 17 **Artemis Prologuizes.** "I am a Goddess." Blank verse, 121 lines. p. 9
- 18 **Waring. I.** "What's become of Waring"¹ (6 sections). **II.** "When I last saw Waring" (3 sections). In 1863, Two Parts. Pt. I, 6 sections, 210 lines; Pt. II, 3 sections, 54 lines; 4-measure, with a few 3-, and 2-measures; 264 lines in couplets, triplets, alternates, and stanzas of 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. Line 134 is single. Iambic and trochaic. p. 10
- 19 **Queen-Worship. I. Rudel and the Lady of Tripoli.** (In 1863, 'Rudel to the Lady of Tripoli.') "I know a Mount," &c. (3 sections). 36 five-measure iambic lines in 2's, 3, 4's, 6, 9. p. 12
- 20 **II. Cristina.** "She should not have looked at me." 8 stanzas of 8, *abcb, defe*: 64 four-measure lines, dactylic and amphibrachic. p. 12
- (4) (3) **Madhouse Cells. I.** ['Johannes Agricola' of 1836.] "There's Heaven above." **II.** ['Porphyria' of 1836.] "The rain set early in to-night." (II. in 1863 reprinted as "Porphyria's Lover," *Poet. Works*, i. 310-12.) p. 13
- 21 **Through the Metidja to Abd-el-Kadr, 1842.** "As I ride" (5 stanzas of 8, all rhyming in *-ide*). 40 lines. Anapaestic. p. 14
- 22 **The Pied Piper of Hamelin; a Child's Story.** (Written for, and inscribed to, W. M. the Younger.²) 15 sections. 305 lines, mainly 4-measure, some 3-, one 1-, 'Rats!': a single, couplets, triplets, 4's, 5's, 6's, 8's, and a 9. Mainly iambs, with amphibrachs, dactyls, anapaests, skilfully varied. This poem was translated into German prose in 1880, taking up the whole of one number of the Hameln newspaper. The poem has been often reprinted: in 1901 *Gems*, Archbp. Trench's *Household Book of English Poetry*, p. 331, Bowen's *Simple English Poems, Curious Stories about Fairies*, with illustrations (Boston, U. S. A.), 1856, &c. &c. p. 14

1843.

BELLS AND POMEGRANATES.

- 23 **No. IV.—THE RETURN OF THE DRUSES.** A Tragedy, in Five Acts. By Robert Browning. Author of "Paracelsus." London: Edward Moxon, Dover Street. MDCCCXLIII. Time 14—.

¹ The original of *Waring* was Mr. Alfred Domett, the author of *Ranolf and Amohia, a South-sea Day-dream*, &c., then Prime Minister in New Zealand. He is named too in (93) *The Guardian-Angel*, l. 37, 54.

² This was William Macready, the eldest boy of the great actor, William Charles Macready. He died in Ceylon a few years ago. He had a talent for drawing, and askt Browning to give him something to illustrate; so Browning made a short poem—still unprinted—out of an old account of the death of the Pope's Legate at the Council of Trent. For this, young Macready made such clever drawings, that Browning tried at a more picturesque subject for him, and wrote *The Piper*: a thing of joy for ever to all with the child's heart, young and old. I needn't say that there is no ground whatever for Mr. H. C. Bowen's conjecture—in his *Simple English Poems*, where the *Piper* is reprinted—that the last four lines of it "very probably contain a sly hit at" Macready for some breaches of promise in his transactions with "Robert Browning—writer of plays."

Price 1s., p. 1-19. Blank verse. Act I, 367 lines; II, 374 lines; III, 327 lines; IV, 319 lines; V, 393 lines. In all, 1780 lines. (One initiated Druse is *Karshook*, not he of Nos. 104, 105: see p. 56 below, and note ¹ on p. 57.)

1843.

BELLS AND POMEGRANATES.

- 24** No. V.—**A BLOT IN THE 'SCUTCHEON.** A Tragedy, in Three Acts. By Robert Browning, Author of "Paracelsus." London: Edward Moxon, Dover Street. MDCCCXLIII. Time 17—. (Playd at the "Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, February 11, 1843.¹ Persons—Mildred Tresham, *Miss Helen Faucit*.² Guendolen Tresham, *Mrs. Stirling*," &c. &c. Phelps took the part of Lord Tresham, and afterwards revivd the play at Sadlers Wells.) p. 1-16. Price 1s. In 3 Acts; blank verse. Act I, sc. i, 101 lines; sc. ii, 168 lines; sc. iii, 241 lines (Song, "There's a woman like a dew-drop," iii. 81-93: two stanzas of 6, couplets of 8 trochees); Act II, 433 lines; Act III, sc. i, 226 lines; sc. ii, 154 lines. In all, 1323 lines.

1844.

BELLS AND POMEGRANATES.

- 25** No. VI.—**COLOMBE'S BIRTHDAY.** A Play, in five Acts. By Robert Browning, author of "Paracelsus." London: Edward Moxon, Dover Street. MDCCCXLIV. p. 1-24. Price 1s. Dedication to Barry Cornwall, dated March 1844. [Acted at the Haymarket Theatre, on April 25, 1853, Miss Helen Faucit playing Colombe.] In 5 Acts: blank verse. Act I, 372 lines; Act II, 350 lines; III, 379 lines; IV, 419 lines; V, 389 lines. In all, 1909 lines.

1844. **The Laboratory** (Ancien Régime). By Robert Browning, in
26 *Hood's Magazine*, June, No. VI, vol. i, p. 513-14. "Now I have tied thy glass mask on tightly³:" 12 verses of 4; double couplets, *aabb*. 4-measure, dactyls and anapæsts: 48 lines.

¹ See the notice of the performance in *The Athenæum* of Feb. 18, 1843.—E. J.

² In *Blackwood's Mag.* for March 1881, p. 326, col. 1, Lady Martin (once Helen Faucit) says of Mr. Elton, her "cruel father" as she used to call him—he acted Brabantio to her Desdemona: "It seems but yesterday that I sat by his side in the green-room at the reading of Robert Browning's beautiful drama 'The Blot in the Scutcheon.' As a rule, Mr. Macready always read the new plays. But owing, I suppose, to some press of business, the task was intrusted on this occasion to the head prompter,—a clever man in his way, but wholly unfitted to bring out, or even to understand, Mr. Browning's meaning. Consequently, the delicate subtle lines were twisted, perverted, and sometimes even made ridiculous in his hands. My "cruel father" was a warm admirer of the poet. He sat writhing and indignant, and tried by gentle asides to make me see the real meaning of the verse. But somehow the mischief proved irreparable, for a few of the actors during the rehearsals chose to continue to misunderstand the text, and never took the interest in the play which they would have done had Mr. Macready read it,—for he had great power as a reader. I always thought it was chiefly because of this *contretemps* that a play, so thoroughly dramatic, failed, despite its painful story, to make the great success which was justly its due."

³ See first line altered on p. 50.

27 Claret and Tokay. By Robert Browning, *ib.* p. 525. **Claret:** "My heart sunk with our claret-flask." 2 stanzas of 6, *ababcc*, 4-measure. 12 iambic lines.

28 Tokay: "Up jumped Tokay on our table." 17 lines: *ababcc*, *dedee*, *ffff*, *ggg*. Two 3-measure lines, the rest 4-: mixt iamb, trochees, and anapæsts.

[The appearance of these three and the following poems in a Magazine, against Browning's way, was due to Hood's illness, thus described at p. 615, vol. i: "A severe attack of the disorder to which he has long been subject—hemorrhage from the lungs, occasioned by the enlargement of the heart (itself brought on by the wearing excitement of ceaseless and excessive literary toil)—has, in the course of a few weeks, reduced Mr. Hood to a state of such extreme debility and exhaustion, that during several days fears were entertained for his life." Mr. Monckton Milnes, now Lord Houghton, askt Browning to help in making up some numbers of the Magazine for poor Hood, and he did so.]

1844. Garden-Fancies. By Robert Browning.

29 1. The Flower's Name. "Here's the Garden she walked across." 6 stanzas of 8 (double alternates, *abab, cdcd*), 4-measure, anapæstic and iambic.

30 2. Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis. "Plague take all pedants, say I!" [in 1863, "all *your* pedants"]. 9 stanzas of 8 (double alternates, *abab, cdcd*), 4-measure, anapæstic and iambic. In *Hood's Magazine*, July, 1844, No. VII, vol. ii, p. 45-8.

1844. The Boy and the Angel. By Robert Browning. "Morning,

31 noon, eve, and night:" 33 separate ryme-couplets. In *Hood's Magazine*, August, 1844, No. VIII, vol. ii, p. 140-2. Besides minor changes,¹ five fresh couplets were put into this poem, and one was substituted for an old one, in 1845,² *Bells and*

¹ As if (1844) [As well as if (1868)]	1868 And morning, evening, noon, and
thy voice to-day	night
1844 In Heaven, God said }	1844 Yet ever o'er }
1868 God said in heaven }	1868 And ever o'er }
1844 Entered [Entered in flesh (-68)] the	1844 And ever lived [on earth (-68)]
empty cell	content
1844 [Lived there (-68)] And play'd the	1844 The flesh [disguise (-68)], remain'd
craftsman well	1844 . . . the dome }
1844 And morn, noon, eve, and night	1868 St. Peter's dome }

² 1845, *Bells and Pom.* VII, p. 20; *Works*, 1868, iv. 160.
1844.

And all his past career
Came back upon him clear—

[*The same.*]

[1, *new.*]

Since when, a boy, he plied his trade,
Till on his life the sickness weighed;

[2, *new.*]

And in his cell, when death drew near,
An angel in a dream brought cheer:

Pom. VII (p. 28, below). Also, one fresh couplet was put-in in 1863 (*ib*). 4-measure, iambs and trochees.

1845. **The Tomo at St. Praxed's** (Rome, 15—). By Robert Browning.
 32 "Vanity, saith the Preacher, Vanity!" Blank verse, 122 lines. In *Hood's Magazine*, March, 1845, No. III, vol. iii, p. 237-239.

[This poem and the next were sent by Browning to help make up the numbers of the Magazine while Hood lay dying. p. 312 says: "During the last month . . . his physical strength has completely given way: and, almost as much through incapacity of his hand to hold the pen, as of his brain for any length of time to guide it, he has at last been compelled to desist from composition. . . . Mr. Hood is more seriously ill than even *he* has ever been before." On Saturday, May 3, 1845, he died. (In *Works*, 1863, i. 369. The Title of the Poem was changed to "The Bishop orders his Tomb in St. Praxed's Church.") Nos. 26-32 were first reprinted in *Bells and Pomegranates*, VII. See next page, and p. 50.]

1845. **The Flight of the Duchess.** By Robert Browning. Part the
 33*a* First, "You're my friend:" to "you shall hear" (9 sections, —216 (chiefly) iambic lines, 1-measure, 2-, 3-, but mainly 4-; in couplets, triplets, fours, fives, a 7 and 11;—§ 10-16 were added in *Bells and Pomegranates*, No. VII), in *Hood's Magazine*, April, 1845, No. IV, vol. iii, p. 313-318.

1845. **BELLS AND POMEGRANATES.**

No. VII.—**DRAMATIC ROMANCES AND LYRICS.** By Robert Browning, Author of "Paracelsus." London: Edward Moxon, Dover Street. MDCCCXLV. p. 1-24. Price 2*s*. Dedication to John Kenyon, dated Nov. 1845.

How rising, &c.
 And in the Angel burn'd.

And rising, &c.
 And on his *sight* the angel burned.
 [3, *new*.]

Vainly hast thou lived many a year.

"I bore thee from thy craftsman's Cell,
 And set thee here; I did not well.
Vain was thy dream of many a year.
 [4, *new*.]

Go back and praise again, &c.

"Thy voice's praise seemed weak; it
 dropped—
 Creation's chorus stopped!
 [The same.]
 [5, *new*.]

"Be again the boy all cur'd;
 I will finish with the world."
 Theocrite grew old at home,
Gabriel dwelt in Peter's dome.

"With that weak voice of our disdain,
 Take up Creation's pausing strain.
 "Back to the cell and poor employ:
 "Resume the craftsman and the boy!"
 Theocrite grew old at home,
A new Pope dwelt in Peter's dome.

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34 How they brought the Good News from Ghent to Aix ¹ (16—). "I sprang to the stirrup:" 10 stanzas of 6 four-measure anapaestic lines each, <i>aabbc</i> : 60 lines. (The MS. is, or was, in the library of J. T. Fields, Boston, U. S. A.)	3
35 <i>Pictor Ignotus</i> . Florence, 15—. ("I could have painted pictures like that youth's:" 5-measure alternates. 72 iambic lines) ...	4
36 Italy in England. "That second time they hunted me:" 4-measure couplet-rymes. 162 iambic lines. (Cald in 1849: "The Italian in England")	4
37 England in Italy. <i>Piano di Sorrento</i> . "Fortù, Fortù, my loved one:" 5 sections. 292 lines in fours, <i>abcb</i> ; <i>a</i> , <i>c</i> , 3-measure, <i>b</i> , 2-measure. Anapaests and iambs. (Cald in 1849: "The English- man in Italy") ²	5
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40, 41 I. "Oh, to be in England:" 1 stanza of 8, and 1 of 12. ⁴ II. "Here's to Nelson's Memory:" 6 couplets and a triplet, 4-measure: mixt trochees, iambs, and anapaests. (In <i>Poet. Works</i> , 1863, i. 12, and 1868, vol. iii, p. 86, put after "Claret and Tokay" under "Nationality in Drinks.") III. "Nobly Cape St. Vincent:" 1 stanza of 7 eight-measure trochaic lines in -ay	8
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¹ "There is no sort of historical foundation about 'Good News to [that is, from] Ghent.' I wrote it under the bulwark of a vessel, off the African Coast [when on a yachting trip in the Mediterranean], after I had been at sea long enough to appreciate even the fancy of a gallop on the back of a certain good horse 'York,' then in my stable at home. It was written in pencil on the fly-leaf of Bartoli's *Simboli*, I remember." R. B.'s letter of Jan. 23, 1881 (? to an American correspondent), in *Academy*, April 2, 1881, from the *Boston Literary World*. In st. iv. the *sch* of 'Aerschot' is pronounced *sk*. (The poem has been reprinted in Routledge's *Popular Readings*, &c.)

"The good news" supposed is that of the 'Pacification of Ghent,' which was welcomed with great delight, because it was believed to end the desperate struggle between Spain and the United Netherlands. See Motley's "Rise of the United Netherlands," vol. iii, Pt. I.—*Boston Literary World*.

² Note in the last lines Browning's wonder that English stupidity could be great enough to doubt whether abolishing the abominable Corn-Laws was wise or not.

³ Wordsworth, having turned Tory, was chiefly aimed at here; but other men and incidents were mixt up with him and his career. The excellent review of Browning's prose *Essay* and Works to 1864 in the *Contemporary Review*, Jan. and Feb. 1867, well says in its second Paper, p. 135, "We know not what individual leader, if any, Mr. Browning had in view; but if the early admirers of the French Revolution had wished to utter their hearts over the Toryism of Wordsworth or Southey, or the Chartists and Christian Socialists of 1848 over Mr. Kingsley's panegyric on the peerage and his vindication of martial law *ad libitum*, they could hardly find fitter language." Though both offences have long been condoned, they were none the less grievous at the time to the two Writers' liberal friends, as I—one of the old Christian Socialists—can witness as to Kingsley.

⁴ St. 1 is *abab* (3-measure), *cc*, *dd*, 4-measure, except *d* 2 two-measure. St. 2 is *efgfg*, *hhiijj*; *ee*, 4-measure, *h* 2 three-measure, the rest 5-measure.

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44	<i>Earth's Immortalities</i> . I. "See, as the prettiest graves:" 8 lines, in 5-measure iambic rhymed couplets. II. "So the year's done with:" 1 stanza of 9, <i>abab, cbcbb</i> , 2-measure, a trochee and amphibrach (or † dactylic). 17 lines	19
45	<i>Song</i> . "Nay, but you, who do not love her:" 2 stanzas of 6, <i>ababcc</i> , 4-measure. 12 trochaic and iambic lines	19
(31)	<i>The Boy and the Angel</i> . "Morning, evening, noon and night:" 38 iambic rhyme-couplets. In <i>Poet. Works</i> , 1863, vol. i, p. 169 (1868, vol. iv. p. 160), a fresh couplet is put in after "And ever lived on earth content," namely:—	19
	("He did God's will; to him, all one If on earth or in the sun.")	
46	<i>Night and Morning</i> . I. <i>Night</i> : 2 stanzas of 6, <i>abcba</i> , 4-measure, iambs and anapaests. "The grey sea," &c. II. <i>Morning</i> : 4 lines, <i>abba</i> , 4-measure, anapaests and iambs. "Round the Cape." (In 1863, I. is called "Meeting at Night;" II. "Parting at Morning.")	20
(27, 28)	<i>Claret and Tokay</i> . I. "My heart sunk with our Claret-flask:" 2 stanzas of 6. II. "Up jumped Tokay on our table:" 17 lines. (These, followed by (41) "Here's to Nelson's Memory" (Beer), are grouped together as "Nationality in Drinks" in <i>Poet. Works</i> , 1863, i. 12; 1868, iii. 85-6.)	20
48a	<i>Saul</i> . (<i>Part the First, only</i> , § 1-9, lines 1-102 (less line 10: see note ¹ , p. 55, below), 5-measure anapaestic rhyme-couplets with 4 triplets: 10 Sections (10-19, lines 103-341) added in <i>Men and Women</i> , ii, 1855.) "Said Abner, 'At last thou art come!'" (accentual pentameter)	21
49	<i>Time's Revenges</i> : "I've a Friend, over the sea:" 33 sections, in couplet-rhymes, 66 lines: one couplet 3-measure; 32, four-measure: iambs and anapaests	22
50	<i>The Glove</i> (Peter Ronsard <i>loquitur</i>). "'Heigho,' yawned one day King Francis:" 10 sections, 188 lines, 3-measure, rhymed couplets, dactylic	23

1846

BELLS AND POMEGRANATES.

(X, XI.) No. VIII and Last.—LURIA; and A SOUL'S TRAGEDY.
By Robert Browning, Author of "Paracelsus." London:
Edward Moxon, Dover Street. MDCCLXVI. p. 1-32. Price
2s. 6d. Dedication of "These last attempts for the present
at Dramatic Poetry" to Walter Savage Landor, dated March
29, 1846.

¹ 'A French rhymed translation of *The Confessional* appeared as "Le Confessionnal (Espagne)" in '*Beautés de la Poésie Anglaise*, par le Chevalier de Chatelain,' vol. v. London, Rolandi, 1872.—S.

- 51 **LURIA**. A Tragedy in Five Acts. Time 14—. p. 2-20. Act I, 392 lines; II, 354 lines; III, 399 lines; IV, 329 lines; V, 338 lines. In all, 1812 lines. Blank verse.
- 52 **A SOUL'S TRAGEDY**. Part First (p. 23-6), being what was called the Poetry of Chiappino's Life; and Part Second (p. 27-32), its Prose. (Part I or Act I, blank verse, 401 lines; Part II or Act II, prose, 648 lines: together, 1049 lines.)

Forewords (not reprinted) to "A Soul's Tragedy":—

"Here ends my first Series of 'Bells and Pomegranates,' and I take the opportunity of explaining, in reply to inquiries, that I only meant by that title to indicate an endeavour towards something like an alternation, or mixture, of music with discoursing, sound with sense, poetry with thought; which looks too ambitious, thus expressed, so the symbol was preferred. It is little to the purpose, that such is actually one of the most familiar of the many Rabbinical (and Patristic) acceptations of the phrase; because I confess that, letting authority alone, I supposed the bare words, in such juxtaposition, would sufficiently convey the desired meaning. 'Faith and good works' is another fancy, for instance, and perhaps no easier to arrive at: yet Giotto placed a pomegranate fruit in the hand of Dante, and Raffaello crowned his Theology (in the *Camera della Segnatura*) with blossoms of the same; as if the Bellari and Vasari would be sure to come after, and explain that it was merely '*simbolo delle buone opere —il qual Pomogranato fu però usato nelle vesti del Pontefice appresso gli Ebrei.*'

R. B."

[1846, Sept. 12, Browning (34) married, at St. Mary-le-bone parish church, our greatest poetess, Elizabeth Barrett Barrett,¹ aged 37; and on March 9, 1849, was born her "own young Florentine," the artist Robert Barrett Browning. Before this time she wrote of her husband: "He is preparing a new edition of his collected poems, in which he pays peculiar attention to the objections made against certain obscurities."—*Univ. Mag.*, March, 1879, p. 333.]

- 1849 **POEMS** by Robert Browning. In two volumes. A new Edition. London: Chapman and Hall, 186, Strand. 1849. [Only *Paracelsus* and *Bells and Pomegranates*.]

Forewords: "Many of these pieces were out of print, the rest had been withdrawn from circulation, when the corrected edition, now submitted to the reader, was prepared. The various Poems and Dramas have received the author's most careful revision. December, 1848."—pp. i-viii, 1-386.

¹ The surname is given as Moulton-Barrett in the *Univ. Mag.*, March, 1879, p. 330.

Contents : vol. i. (2) Paracelsus, p. 1. (7) Pippa Passes. A Drama, p. 163. (8) King Victor and King Charles. A Tragedy, p. 231. (25) Colombe's Birthday. A Play, p. 303.

Vol. ii. (24) A Blot in the Scutcheon. A Tragedy, p. 1. (23) The Return of the Druses. A Tragedy, p. 61. (51) Luria. A Tragedy, p. 139. (52) A Soul's Tragedy, p. 211. Dramatic Romances and Lyrics, p. 253 : 38 of the 41 pieces¹ in *Bells and Pomegranates*, nos. III. and VII, namely :—

	Page		Page
Cavalier Tunes.		(37) The Englishman in Italy	330
(9) I. Marching Along	255	(38) The Lost Leader	340
(10) II. Give a Rouse	256	(39) The Lost Mistress	342
(11) III. Boot and Saddle	257	(40) Home-Thoughts from Abroad	343
(12) My last Duchess	258	(41 Nelson, left out)	
(13) Count Gismond	260	(42) Home-Thoughts from the Sea	
(14) Incident of the French Camp	266	(“Nobly, nobly Cape St.	
(15) Soliloquy of the Spanish		Vincent”)	344
Cloister	268	(32) The Bishop orders his Tomb	
(16) In a Gondola	271	at St. Praxed's Church	345
(17) Artemis prologuizes	280	Garden Fancies.	
(18) Waring	285	(29) I. The Flower's Name	349
(19) Rudel to the Lady of Tri-		(30) II. Sibrandus Schafnabur-	
poli	295	gensis	351
(20) Cristina	297	(26) The Laboratory	354
(4) I. Madhouse Cell : Johannes		(43) The Confessional	357
Agricola in Meditation	300	(33) The Flight of the Duchess (all)	360
(3) II. Madhouse Cell : Por-		(44) Earth's Immortalities	393
phyria's Lover	302	(45) Song (“Nay but you”)	394
(21) Through the Metidja to Abd-		(31) The Boy and the Angel	395
el-Kadr	304	(46) Meeting at Night	399
(22) The Pied Piper of Hamelin	306	(47) Parting at Morning	399
(34) “How they brought the good		(48) Saul	400
News from Ghent to Aix”	318	(49) Time's Revenges	407
(35) Pictor Ignotus	321	(50) The Glove	409
(36) The Italian in England	324		

1850 (XII.) **CHRISTMAS-EVE AND EASTER-DAY.** A Poem. By
53 Robert Browning. London : Chapman and Hall, 186, Strand.

1850. p. i-iv, 1-142, 143-4 blank. *Christmas-Eve*,² 22 Sections, 2259 lines, in couplets, fours (*abba* and *abab*), a 3, a 6, a 7, and 2 singles. *Easter-Day*, 33 Sections, 1040 lines, in couplets, 3 singles,³ and a triplet. Both poems, 4-measure, 3299 lines, mainly iambic, with anapaests, amphibrachs, &c. (Written at ‘Florence, 1850.’ *Works*, 1863, iii. 163.)

¹ The 3 poems left out are the Drink ones (27) Claret, (28) Tokay, (41) Beer (“Here’s to Nelson’s Memory”).

² The Congregationalists say that Browning sat for some years under the ministry of one of their preachers, Thomas Jones, an able and eloquent Welshman.

³ Two other single lines in the 1850 edition noted by Mr. Carson, *E.-Day*, § xxvi, p. 129, were, I find, turned into a couplet in the 1863 ed., *Works*, iii. 242 :

1850	1863
<i>Of beauty in this life. And pass</i>	<i>Of beauty in this life. But through</i>
<i>Life's line,—and what has earth to do</i>	<i>Life pierce,—and what has earth to do</i>

- 1852 [25 Spurious] Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley. With **AN**
54 **INTRODUCTORY ESSAY** by Robert Browning. London :
Edward Moxon, Dover Street. 1852. p. i-vi, 1-165. Intro-
ductory Essay, p. 1-44 (on the objective and subjective poet ;
on the relation of the latter's life to his work ; on Shelley,
his nature, art, and character : so interesting and important
that I have, with Browning's leave, reprinted it as the First of
The Browning Society's Papers, 1881. See p. 70, below).
- 1855 **MEN AND WOMEN.** By Robert Browning. In two Volumes.
London : Chapman and Hall, 193, Piccadilly. 1855. Vol. i,
p. i-iv, 1-260 ; vol. ii, p. i-iv, 1-241. (Written in 'London
and Florence, 184-, 185-'.¹)

CONTENTS.—VOL. I.

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55 Love among the Ruins. "Where the quiet-coloured end of even- ing." 14 stanzas of 6 lines each, <i>aa, bb, cc</i> , the first line of each couplet 6-measure, the second line 2-measure. 84 trochaic lines	1
56 A Lover's Quarrel. "Oh, what a dawn of day !" 22 stanzas of 7, <i>aa, bb, ccc</i> ; <i>bb</i> 2-measure, the rest 3-. 154 anapaestic lines ...	17
57 Evelyn Hope. "Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead." 7 stanzas of 8, <i>abab, cdcd</i> , 4-measure. 56 anapaestic and iambic lines ...	19
58 Up at a Villa—Down in the City. (As distinguished by an Italian Person of Quality.) "Had I but plenty of money." 10 stanzas, 6-measure. 64 lines. (St. I, a triplet in <i>-are</i> ; II, a triplet in <i>-east</i> ; III, a quatrain in <i>-ull, -ool</i> ; IV, a six in <i>-y</i> ; V, two couplets ; VI, a couplet, and a triplet (in <i>-ell</i>) ; VII, a five in <i>-ash</i> ; VIII, two couplets and a triplet (in <i>-ill</i>) ; IX, a triplet in <i>-in</i> , and seven couplets ; X, six couplets.) Dactyls and anapaests ...	23
59 A Woman's Last Word. "Let's contend no more, Love." 10 verses of 4, <i>abab</i> ; <i>a</i> , 3-measure ; <i>b</i> , 2-measure. 40 trochaic lines	31
60 Fra Lippo Lippi. "I am poor brother Lippo." Blank verse (except the 6½ <i>stornelli</i> , lines 53-7, 68-9, 110-111, 238-9, 248-9, which are couplet-ryme, the first line being 2-meas., the second 4-). 392 lines	35
61 A Toccata of Galuppi's. "Oh, Galuppi, Baldassaro." 15 eight- measure trochaic triplets. 45 lines ...	56
62 By the Fire-Side. "How well I know what I mean to do." 53 stanzas of 5, <i>ababa</i> , 4-measure, except <i>a</i> 3, which is 2-measure. 265 anapaestic and iambic lines ...	63
63 Any Wife to any Husband. "My love, this is the bitterest." 21 stanzas of 6, <i>aab, ccb</i> , 5-measure iambics. 126 lines ...	81
64 An Epistle concerning the strange Medical Experience of Karshish, the Arab Physician. (On Lazarus after his Resurrection.) "Kar- shish, the picker-up of learning's crumbs." Blank verse. 312 lines	90
65 Mesmerism. "All I believed is true !" 27 stanzas of 5, <i>abbaa</i> ; <i>a</i> , 3-measure ; <i>b</i> , 2-measure. Anapaests and iambs. 135 lines. (See <i>A Lovers' Quarrel</i> , st. 11) ...	107
66 A Serenade at the Villa. "That was I, you heard last night." 12 stanzas of 5, <i>ababa</i> , 4-measure. 60 trochaic lines ...	117
67 My Star. "All that I know." 1 stanza of 13 lines, <i>abab, cdcd, efef</i> ; first 8 lines 2-measure ; last 5, five-measure : anapaestic ...	122

¹ From the Tauchnitz Selections. The *Works*, 1868, have only "Florence, 185-,"
v. 205. Browning evidently had a hand in these Tauchnitz Selections.

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68 Instans Tyrannus. "Of the million or two." 7 stanzas of from 4 to 18 lines; anapestic couplet-ryme, 1st line 3-measure, 2nd line two. 72 lines 123	123
69 A Pretty Woman. "That fawn-skin-dappled hair of hers." 18 stanzas of 4, <i>abba</i> ; <i>a</i> , 4-measure; <i>b</i> , 2-measure. 72 lines, iambs and trochees 128	128
70 " Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came. " (See Edgar's Song in <i>Leary</i> .) "My first thought was." 34 stanzas of 6, <i>abbaab</i> ; 5-measure iambs. 204 lines 134	134
71 Respectability. "Dear, had the world in its caprice." 3 stanzas of 8, <i>abba, cddc</i> , 4-measure iambs. 24 lines 149	149
72 A Light Woman. "So far as our story approaches the end." 14 verses, alternates, <i>abab</i> ; <i>a</i> and <i>b1</i> four-measure, <i>b2</i> three-measure: amphibrachs, iambs, &c. 56 lines ¹ 151	151
73 The Statue and the Bust. "There's a palace in Florence." In linkt 4-measure threes, <i>aba, bcb, cde, ded, efe, fgf</i> , &c., ending with a linkt 4, alternates. 250 lines: iambs and anapæsts 156	156
74 Love in a Life. "Room after room." 2 stanzas of 8, <i>abc, dd, abc</i> ; first <i>abc</i> , 2-measure; the rest, 4-measure. 16 lines: dactyls, with amphibrachs, &c. 173	173
75 Life in a Love. "Escape me?" 22 lines; <i>a</i> three, 4 fours, and <i>a</i> three; <i>abc, deed, fgfg, hihi, jkjk, abc. abc</i> , 1-measure; the rest, 4: chiefly iambic, with anapæsts 175	175
76 How it strikes a Contemporary. "I only knew one poet in my life." Blank verse, 5 sections. 115 lines 177	177
77 The last Ride together. "I said—Then, dearest, since 'tis so." 10 stanzas of 11, <i>aabbc, ddeec</i> , 4-measure: iambs, with anapæsts. 110 lines 184	184
78 The Patriot. An Old Story. "It was roses, roses, all the way." 6 stanzas of 5, <i>ababa</i> , 4-measure, iambs and anapæsts. 30 lines. (The <i>Brescia</i> in l. 26 is cut out in ed. 1863.—Was the Patriot Arnold of Brescia?—T. W. Carson.) 191	191
79 Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha. "Hist, but a word, fair and soft." 29 stanzas: 28 of 5 lines, <i>ababa</i> (second <i>ab</i> , 4-measure; others 3-); the 29th is of 9 lines, <i>cdcd, ceeed</i> (<i>d</i> , 3-measure; <i>c, e</i> , 4-). 144 lines: dactylic (or ? anapestic) 194	194
80 Bishop Blougram's Apology. "No more wine?" 38 sections: blank verse. 1011 lines. (Cardinal Wiseman was Bp. Blougram.) ² 205	205

¹ l. 55-6: "And, Robert Browning, you writer of plays,
Here's a subject made to your hand!"

² It was said by Father Prout that Cardinal Wiseman himself reviewed *Men and Women* in the Romanist journal *The Rambler* (London, Jan. 1856, vol. v, p. 54-71). If so, he did it very good-humouredly, as the following extracts, kindly sent me by Mr. Shepherd, show: "'Bishop Blougram's Apology,' though utterly mistaken in the very groundwork of religion, though starting from the most unworthy notions of the work of a Catholic bishop, and defending a self-indulgence which every honest man must feel to be disgraceful, is yet in its way triumphant." . . . [Then, after stating Blougram's argument] "All this, and more, Blougram urges with a fertility of illustration and felicity of argument that (in spite of the miserable shortcoming of his principle) is quite delightful. Who, after reading his Apology twice, or thrice perhaps, will object to argument in poetry? Why, the very first use of poetry was to instruct. . . .

"For ourselves, we thank Mr. Browning, sceptical and reckless as he is, for a rare treat in these thoughtful and able volumes. . . . Though much of their matter is extremely offensive to [Roman-] Catholics, yet beneath the surface there is an undercurrent of thought that is by no means inconsistent with our religion; and if Mr. Browning is a man of will and action, and not a mere dreamer and talker, *we should never feel surprise at his conversion.*"

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81 Memorabilia. "Ah, did you once see Shelley plain!" 4 verses of 4-measure alternates, <i>abab</i> : iambs. 16 lines 259	
CONTENTS.—VOL. II.	
82 Andrea del Sarto. (Called the Faultless Painter.) "But do not let us quarrel any more." Blank verse. 270 lines 1	
83 Before. "Let them fight it out, friend!" 10 verses of 4 (double couplets, <i>aa, bb</i>), 6-measure trochaics. 40 lines 15	
84 After. "Take the cloak from his face." 18 lines, separate couplets (1st line of each, 3-measure; 2nd line, 2-measure): anapæstic 19	
85 In three Days. "So I shall see her in three days." 4 stanzas; 1 and 2 of 7 lines (<i>abcc, ddd; abjj, kkk</i>); no. 3 of 9 lines (<i>ceffgghhh</i>); no. 4 of 15 (<i>aiiaia, gaggg, cc, abc</i>), 4-measure iambs. 38 lines 21	
86 In a Year. "Never any more." 10 stanzas of 8, <i>abca, dbcd; a</i> and <i>d</i> , alternately 3- and 2-measure; <i>b</i> , 2-measure; <i>c</i> , 4-measure. 80 trochaic lines 24	
87 Old Pictures in Florence. "The morn when first it thunders in March." 36 stanzas of 8, <i>abab, cdcd</i> , 4-measure iambs and anapæsts. 288 lines 30	
88 In a Balcony. [Written at Bagni di Lucca, 1853.] First Part 49	
" Second Part 70	
" Third Part (All three, blank verse. 919 lines) 88	
{48a} Saul (Part I. (§ 1-9) revised and 1 line added ¹ : Sections 10-19 are	
48b { new). 5-measure (mainly) anapæstic couplet ryme, with 9 triplets. 341 lines in all 111	
89 "De Gustibus." "Your ghost will walk, you lover of trees." 2 stanzas: No. one, 13 lines; <i>abbnna, cddddd</i> ; No. two, 33 lines (<i>ceff, ghgg, hiihh, jj, kllk, mqqqm, oo, pp, oooo</i>): iambs, dactyls, and anapæsts 147	
90 Women and Roses. "I dream of a red-rose tree." 8 stanzas, alternate 3-measure triplets and 4-measure nines: the 4 nines are of 4 couplets each, with burden, "They circle their rose on my rose tree." 48 lines: iambs, anapæsts, dactyls, &c. 150	
91 Protus. "Among these latter busts." 27 five-measure couplets and 1 triplet. 57 iambic lines 154	
92 Holy-Cross Day. (On which the Jews were forced to attend an annual Christian Sermon in Rome.) 17 lines of prose, then 20 stanzas of 6 (3 four-measure couplets each), and prose note of 2 lines: "Fee, faw, fum! bubble and squeak!" Dactyls, with anapæsts, iambs, &c. 120 lines of verse, 19 of prose 158	
93 The Guardian Angel: a Picture at Fano [by Guercino]. ² "Dear and great Angel." 8 stanzas of 7, <i>abab, cca</i> , 5-measure iambs. 56 lines 167	
94 Cleon. "Cleon the poet." Blank verse, 10 sections, 353 lines ... 171	
95 The Twins. "Give" and "It shall be given unto you." "Grand rough old Martin Luther." 7 verses of 4, alternates. 28 lines: dactyls and iambs 190	

¹ 1845 To betoken that Saul and the Spirit Have gone their dread ways. 9
 1855 To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have ended their strife, 9 }
 (p. 112) And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch sinks back upon life. 10 }
² Written at Ancona (l. 56),—where Mrs. Browning, 'My Angel' (l. 46), 'My Love' (l. 54), was with him,—after 3 visits to the Chapel at Fano (l. 43-4). The 'Alfred, dear friend,' of st. VI, l. 37, is Mr. Alfred Domett, 'Waring' of No. 13, then Prime Minister in New Zealand. See too st. VIII, l. 54-5:

"My Love is here. Where are you, dear old friend?
 How rolls the Wairoa at your world's far end?
 This is Ancona, yonder is the sea." 56

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96 Popularity. "Stand still, true poet that you are." 13 stanzas of 5, <i>ababa</i> , 4-measure, but last <i>a</i> , 3-measure: iambics. 65 lines ...	193
97 The Heretic's Tragedy. A Middle-Age Interlude. 9 lines of prose, then 10 stanzas: 9 of 9 lines, <i>abab, cdcd</i> ; No. V of 8, <i>abab, cdcd</i> . "The Lord we look to, once for all." 89 lines of verse; 4-measure. Iambs and anapaests, &c. ...	198
98 Two in the Campagna. "I wonder do you feel to-day." 12 stanzas of 5, <i>ababa</i> ; 4-measure iambics, with anapaests. 60 lines ...	205
99 A Grammarian's Funeral. ¹ [<i>Time</i> —Shortly after the revival of Learning in Europe.] 148 lines, alternates, <i>abab</i> ; <i>a</i> , 5-measure, iambic; <i>b</i> , 2-measure, dactylic ...	210
100 One Way of Love. ² "All June I bound the rose in sheaves." 3 stanzas of 6, all rhymed couplets, 4-measure iambics. 18 lines ...	218
101 Another Way of Love. "June was not over." 3 stanzas of 11, <i>abc, dd, abc, eee</i> ; <i>e</i> , 4-measure; the rest, 2-. 33 lines: dactyls, amphibrachs, anapaests, iambs, &c. ...	220
102 "Transcendentalism:" a Poem in twelve Books. ("Stop playing, poet!") 4 sections, 51 lines, blank verse ...	223
103 Misconceptions. "This is a spray the Bird clung to." 2 stanzas of 7, <i>ababb, aa</i> ; <i>ababb</i> , 3-measure; <i>aa</i> , 4-measure. 14 dactylic lines	227
104 One Word More. To E. B. B. (his Wife). <i>London, September, 1855.</i> "There they are, my fifty men and women." Blank verse, 20 sections, 203 lines, trochaic pentameters. ³ [There are 50 other poems in the 4 volumes.] ...	229
1856. Ben Karshook's Wisdom. By Robert Browning. 5 verses of 2-measure dactylic alternates, <i>abab</i> . 20 lines. (<i>Karshook</i> is a 'thistle' in Hebrew. One 'Karshook' is in <i>The Return of the Druses</i> .)	

I.

- 105 "Would a man 'scape the rod?"
 Rabbi Ben Karshook saith,
 "See that he turn to God
 The day before his death."
 "Ay, could a man inquire
 When it shall come!" I say.
 The Rabbi's eye shoots fire—
 "Then let him turn to-day!"

II.

Quoth a young Sadducee:
 "Reader of many rolls,
 Is it so certain we
 Have, as they tell us, souls?"
 "Son, there is no reply!"
 The Rabbi bit his beard:
 "Certain, a soul have I—
 We may have none," he sneer'd.

Thus Karshook, the Hiram's-Hammer,
 The Right-hand Temple-column,
 Taught babes in grace their grammar,
 And struck the simple, solemn.

Rome, April 27, 1854.

¹ On l. 131 of this poem, "Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*," p. 283, *Works*, i. 1863, the following letter by Browning appeared in the *Daily News* of Nov. 21, 1874:—

"To the Editor of *The Daily News*.

Sir,—In a clever article this morning [Nov. 20] you speak of "the doctrine of the enclitic *De*"—"which, with all deference to Mr. Browning, in point of fact does not exist." No, not to Mr. Browning: but pray defer to Herr Buttman, whose fifth list of "enclitics" ends "with the inseparable *De*"—or to Curtius, whose fifth list ends also with "*De* (meaning '*towards*,' and as a demonstrative appendage)." That this is not to be confounded with the accentuated "*De*, meaning *but*," was the "doctrine" which the Grammarian bequeathed to those capable of receiving it.—I am, Sir, yours obediently,

Nov. 20.

R. B."

² Cald "Song" in *Selections*, 1865, p. 87.

³ For the abridgd form of this poem in the *Selection* of 1865, see p. 77, col. 2.

Printed in *The Keepsake*, 1856, edited by Miss Power. London: David Bogue, 1856, p. 16.

* * This poem is not included in any volume or collected Edition of Browning's Works.—R. H. S.¹

1857. **May and Death.** "I wish that when you died last May."

106 5 verses of 4, *abcb*: 4-measure iambics. 20 lines.

This poem first appeared in *The Keepsake*, for 1857, edited by Miss Power (London: D. Bogue), p. 164. First reprinted, with some new readings, in *Dramatis Personæ*, 1864, p. 145.

Readings of the earlier version of 1857:—

line 8: Moon's birth [*for* Moon-births] and the long evening-ends.

lines 9-10: So, for their sake, prove [*for* be] May still May!

Let their new time, like [*for* as] mine of old.

line 15: Except a streak, &c. [*for* Save a sole streak, &c.]

line 19: And [*for* But] I,—where'er the plant is [*for* leaf grows] there.

—R. H. S.

[1861, June 29, Elizabeth Barrett Browning died², aged 52.]

1863.³ **THE POETICAL WORKS of Robert Browning.** Third Edition. || Vol. I. Lyrics, Romances, Men and Women. || Vol. II. Tragedies and other Plays. || Vol. III. *Paracelsus*, Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day, *Sordello*. London: Chapman and Hall, 193, Piccadilly, 1863. Each vol. has a 2nd title. I. Lyrics, Romances, Men and Women. By Robert Browning. II. Tragedies and other Plays. By Robert Browning. III. *Paracelsus*, Christmas Eve and Easter Day, *Sordello*. By Robert Browning: with the publisher's name and address to each vol. [There are no new poems in this edition.]

[Garden Fancies. III. is "Camp and Cloister; II. Cloister (Spanish)" of *Bells*, No. 7, but now call'd *Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister* (G-r-r—t' 'e go, my heart's abhorrence!), 9 stanzas of 8, p. 18-21. Johannes Agricola in Meditation," p. 284-6 ("There's heaven above, and night by night"), is "Madhouse Cells," I, of *Bells*, No. 13.]

¹ It seems clear that this poem was written before *Men and Women* was published in 1855, and that it was meant to be part of that work; for in "One Word More, to E. B. B., London, September 1855," *Men and Women*, vol. ii, p. 237, Browning says:

"I am mine and yours—the rest be all men's,
Karshook, Cleon, Norbert and the fifty."

The second line is still the same in *Poetical Works*, 1868, vol. v, p. 319: "Karshook, Cleon, Norbert and the fifty;" but in the *Tauchnitz Poet. Works* of 1872, vol. i, p. 290, the *Karshook* is altered into *Karshish*:

"Karshish, Cleon, Norbert and the fifty."

This change was made by Browning himself. He wishes 'Karshish' to be the reading.

² See Mr. James Thomson's pretty poem on her death, below, p. 115.

³ In 1863 came out the first *Selections from the Poetical Works of Robert Browning* (Chapman and Hall). It was edited by John Forster and B. W. Procter (Barry Cornwall). See *Appendix*, p. 73, below.

Vol. i, p. vii. "I dedicate these Volumes to my old friend John Forster, glad and grateful that he who, from the first publication of the various forms they include, has been their promptest and staunchest helper, should seem even nearer to me now than thirty years ago.

R. B."

London, April 21, 1863.

Vol. i, p. xiv. "In this Volume [i.] are collected and redistributed the pieces first published in 1842, 1845, and 1855, respectively, under the titles of 'Dramatic Lyrics,' 'Dramatic Romances,' and 'Men and Women.' Part of these were inscribed to my dear friend John Kenyon: I hope the whole may obtain the honour of an association with his memory.

R. B."

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1864. **DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.** By Robert Browning. London : Chapman and Hall, 193, Piccadilly. 1864. p. i-vi, 1-250.

CONTENTS.

107 James Lee (in 9 Sections). "Ah, love, but a day." [In <i>Poet. Works</i> , 1868, vi. 41, this poem is cald "James Lee's Wife"; the heading to § 1 is altered to "[James Lee's Wife speaks] at the Window"; that to § 2 is made "[Reading a Book] under the Cliff"; and Part 2 of section VIII, only 2 lines in 1864, is turnd into § 2 and 3, of 22 and 41 lines, the last 2 of which are the original 2 lines of 1864 ¹ . The full poem is 368 lines. (See note, next page).]	3
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¹ *ed.* 1864, § VIII, Part II :—

Go, little girl with the poor coarse hand !
I have my lesson, shall understand.

ed. 1868, vi. 57-9, § VIII, Pts II, III :—

"Tis a clay cast, the perfect thing, 268
From Hand live once, dead long ago :
Princess-like it wears the ring
To fancy's eye, by which we know 271
That here at length a master found
His match, a proud lone soul its mate,
As soaring genius sank to ground
And pencil could not emulate 275

The beauty in this,—how free, how fine
To fear almost !—of the limit-line. 277
Long ago the god, like me
The worm, learned, each in our degree :
Looked and loved, learned and drew,
Drew and learned and loved again,
While fast the happy minutes flew,
Till beauty mounted into his brain 283
And on the finger which outvied
His art he placed the ring that's there,
Still by fancy's eye descried, 286
In token of a marriage rare :
For him on earth, his art's despair,
For him in heaven, his soul's fit bride. 289

188 Gold Hair: a Legend of Fieschi. "Oh, the beautiful girl." 27 stanzas of 5. 1st ed. 1864. vol. vi. p. 42-9, this poem has 30 stanzas, three fresh ones being put in after st. 29. The fresh 21 begins—Hid there! why?—22—"Truth is truth"; 23—"Talk not of God!"; Then 24 is the original 21,—"Louis-Foex, &c." The

III p. 53
 Little girl with the poor coarse hand 290
 I turned from to a cold clay cast—
 I have my lesson, understand!
 The worth of flesh and blood at last:
 Nothing but beauty in a Hand! 294
 Because he could not change the hue,
 Mend the lines and make them true
 To this which met his soul's demand.—
 Would Da Vinci turn from you? 295
 I hear him laugh my woes to scorn—
 "The fool forsooth is all forsoen" 300
 "Because the beauty, she thinks best,
 "Lived long ago or was never born,—
 "Because no beauty bears the test" 303
 "In this rough peasant Hand! Confessed
 "Art is null and study void!"
 "So sayest thou! So said not I,
 "Who threw the faulty pencil by, 307
 "And years instead of hours employed,
 "Learning the veritable use 309
 "Of flesh and bone and nerve beneath

—Lines and line of the outer sheath,
 "If haply I might reproduce 3
 "One motive of the mechanism, (si.) 3
 "Flesh and bone and nerve that make
 "The poorest coarsest human hand
 "An object worthy to be scanned
 "A whole life long for their sole sake. 3
 "Shall earth and the cramped moun-
 space
 "Yield the heavenly crowning grace? 3
 "Now the parts and then the whole!
 "Who art thou, with stunted soul
 "And stunted body, thus to cry 3
 "I love,"—shall that be life's strait dol
 "I must live beloved or die!" 3
 "This peasant hand that spins the we
 "And bakes the bread, why lives it on
 "Poor and coarse with beauty gone,—
 "What use survives the beauty! Fool

Go little girl with the poor coarse han
 I have my lesson, shall understand. 3

As to metre, § I is 3 stanzas of 7 lines each, *ababcb*; 2-measure. § II is 3 stanzas of 8, *abacddb*; *a, d* being 4-measure, *b, c* 2-measure. § III is 4 stanzas of 7, *ababca*; *a, c* being 4-measure (anapestic), *b* 2-measure. § IV is 8 stanzas of *abaab*; *a* 4-measure, *b* 3-measure. § V is 5 stanzas of 6, *ababcb*; *a* and *b* 1 bei 2-measure, *c* 2 three-measure, *b* 2 and *c* 1 four-measure. § VI is 16 stanzas of *ababa*,—*a* 1, *a* 2 and *b*, being five-measure, *b* 2 four-measure, and *a* 3 three-meas § VII is 2 stanzas of 6, *abc abc*, 5-measure. § VIII is in 3 divisions in couple triplets, fours, fives, sixes, a seven, and a nine, and a single, l. 313: i. *abab dd faaf hh, ijijijii, kllkk*. ii. *bcb, gmgm, hh aa, ijij, opopo*. iii. *agagaiiai, rrrrsz, tuu vvvv, x, yaay, zz, AAuAu, BCCB, aa*. All § VIII is 4-measure, iambic. § IX 8 stanzas of 5, *ababa*, 4-measure, iambic, with anapaests and dactyls. § I is iam and anapaests. § II is (4-measure) iambs and (2-measure) trochees. § IV and V: mainly iambs and anapaests. § VI and VII are iambic. Of § VI, "Still ailing, Wind the first 6 stanzas were printed in 1836: see p. 40, above. The last 10 stanzas were added in 1864. James Lee may in this point be compared with Tennyson's *Mau* 1855, of which one § was printed in 1837.

1
 Hid there? Why? Could the girl be wont 101
 (She the stainless soul) to treasure up
 Money, earth's trash and heaven's affront?
 Had a spider found out the communion-cup,
 Was a toad in the christening-font? 105
 XXII.
 Truth is truth: too true it was. 106
 Gold! She hoarded and hugged it first,
 Longed for it, leaned o'er it, loved it—alas—
 Till the humour grew to a head and burst,
 And she cried, at the final pass,— 110
 XXIII.
 "Talk not of God, my heart is stone! 111
 "Nor lover nor friend—be gold for both!
 "Gold I lack; and, my all, my own,
 "It shall bide in my hair. I scarce die loth
 "If they let my hair alone!" 115

	Page
full poem has 150 lines.] The stanzas rhyme <i>ababa</i> ; <i>abab</i> being 4-measure, <i>a</i> 3 three-measure: dactyls, iambs, and anapæsts ...	27
109 The Worst of it. "Would it were I had been false." 19 stanzas of 6, <i>abacba</i> , <i>c</i> with internal rhyme. 114 four-measure lines: iambs and anapæsts, mainly ...	37
110 Dis aliter visum; or, Le Byron de nos Jours: "Stop, let me have the truth of that!" 30 stanzas of 5, <i>abcca</i> , <i>b</i> with internal rhyme. 4-measure iambics. 150 lines ...	47
111 Too Late: "Here was I with my arm and heart." 12 stanzas of 12, <i>ababed</i> , <i>efefed</i> . 4-measure. 144 lines: iambs, dactyls, anapæsts ...	57
112 Abt Vogler. (After he has been extemporising upon the Musical Instrument of his Invention.) ¹ "Would that the structure brave." 12 stanzas of 8 (2 alternates, <i>abab</i> , <i>cdcd</i>), 6-measure. 96 lines: Alexandrines ...	67
113 Rabbi ben Esra: "Grow old along with me." 32 stanzas of 6, <i>aab ccb</i> ; <i>aa</i> , <i>cc</i> are 3-measure; <i>b</i> 1, five-measure; <i>b</i> 2, six-measure. 192 iambic lines. [One of the deepest and weightiest of all Browning's works. My favourite one. It contains the Philosophy of Life.]	77
114 A Death in the Desert. Proem, 12 lines: "Supposed of Pamphylax the Antiochene," then 29 Sections (No. 10 being Comment) and Epilogue. Blank verse. 686 lines. [St. John's Death. A Defence of Christianity, and an argument against Strauss, &c.] ...	91
115 Caliban upon Setebos; or, Natural Theology in the Island: "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." Proem of 23 lines, "Will sprawl, now that the heat of day is best," then 11 Sections and Epilogue. Blank verse. 295 lines ...	123
116 Confessions: "What is he buzzing in my ears?" 9 verses of 4: alternates. <i>abab</i> ; <i>a</i> 4-measure, <i>b</i> 3-measure. 36 lines: iambs and anapæsts ...	139
(106) May and Death: "I wish that when you died last May." 5 verses of 4: 4-measure alternates. 20 iambic lines. (See p. 57, above.)	145
117 Prospice: "Fear death? to feel the fog in my throat": 28 lines, alternates, <i>abab</i> ; <i>a</i> 4-measure; <i>b</i> 2-measure: mixt iambs and anapæsts. [A noble poem. Face the last fight with Death. Your's the Gain.] ...	149
118 Youth and Art: "It once might have been, once only." 17 verses of 4: 3-measure alternates. 68 lines: mainly iambs and anapæsts	153
119 A Face: "If one could have that little head of hers." 22 lines: 2 alternates, 4 couplets, and a six, <i>abbba</i> . 5-measure iambics ...	161
120 A Likeness: "Some people hang portraits up." 5 sections. 69 lines; 61 three-measure (in 2's, 4's, 5's, an 8 and a 9); 8 four-measure (two 3's and a 2). Amphibrachs, anapæsts, iambs, &c. ...	165
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122 Apparent Failure: "No, for I'll save it!" 7 stanzas of 9, <i>abab</i> , <i>cdcd</i> . 4-measure iambics. 63 lines. [All souls are to be saved.]	239
123 Epilogue.² First Speaker. "On the First of the Feast of Feasts."	

¹ *Abt Vogler* was translated into Greek Lyric Verse in "Translations into Greek and Latin Verse, by R. C. Jebb, M.A., Fellow and Tutor of Trinity College, Cambridge, &c. &c. Cambridge: Deighton, Bell and Co. London: Bell and Daldy." 1873, pp. 2-15.—T. W. Carson.

² In 1865, came out, in 'Moxon's Miniature Poets,' the second 'Selection from the Works of Robert Browning.' See Appendix, p. 76, below.

In 1866 was publisht "A Selection from the Poetry of Elizabeth Barrett Browning. London: Chapman and Hall, 193, Piccadilly, 1866." Selected and prefaced by Robert Browning. The Preface, of 13 lines, prose, is signed "R. B." and dated "London, November, 1865."—S. It is as follows:

- Mainly anapaests and iamba. 3 stanzas of 5, *abab*; and a 4th of 6, *ababab*: all 3-measure. Second Speaker. "Gone now! All gone across the dark so far." 44 lines, alternates, 5-measure iambica. Third Speaker. "Witless alike of will and way divine." 12 triplets, 5-measure iambica. 101 lines 245
1864. '217 Orpheus and Eurydice. F. Leighton.' (Quoted from the Royal Academy Catalogue.)
- 124 "But give them me—the mouth, the eyes, the brow!
Let them once more absorb me! One look now
Will lap me round for ever, not to pass
Out of its light, though darkness lie beyond!
Hold me but safe again within the bond
Of one immortal look! All woe that was
Forgotten, and all terror that may be
Defied; no past is mine, no future! look at me!"
'Robert Browning, *A fragment*.'—From the Catalogue of the Royal Academy Exhibition, 1864, p. 13, where it is actually printed as prose: a mess—specially in lines 6-8—duly condemned by *Punch*, May 28, 1864, and the *Observer* before that. 1 stanza of 8, *aab ccb dd*. 5-measure iambica. 8 lines. Reprinted in the *Selections* of 1865, p. 215, and in *Poet. Works*, 1868, vi. 153, and there called "Eurydice to Orpheus: a picture by Frederick Leighton, A.R.A.")
[In 1867 Browning was elected an Honorary Fellow of Balliol, and on June 25, 1867, the degree of M.A. (Oxford) was conferred on him by diploma.]
1868. The Poetical Works of Robert Browning, M.A., Honorary Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford. Smith, Elder and Co., London. 1868¹ [in 6 volumes]. post 8vo. [For Foretalk, see *Pauline*, p. 37, above. There is one new Stanza of 8 lines in these
- 125 *Works: Deaf and Dumb*. See note, p. 64.]
- Vol. i, p. i-viii, 1-310. *Pauline—Paracelsus—Strafford*. See note, p. 64.
Vol. ii, p. i-iv, 1-287. *Sordello—Pippa Passes*.
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Vol. v, p. i-iv, 1-321. *A Soul's Tragedy—Luria—Christmas-Eve and Easter Day—Men and Women*.
Vol. vi, p. i-iv, 1-233. *In a Balcony—Dramatis Personæ*. [General Index to the 6 vols., as follows.]

"It has been attempted to retain and to dispose the characteristics of the general poetry, whence this is an abstract, according to an order which should allow them the prominence and effect they seem to possess when considered in the larger, not exclusively the lesser works of the poet. A musician might say, such and such chords are repeated, others made subordinate by distribution, so that a single movement may imitate the progress of the whole symphony. But there are various ways of modulating up to and connecting any given harmonies; and it will be neither a surprise nor a pain to find that better could have been done, as to both selection and sequence, than, in the present case, all care and the profoundest veneration were able to do. R. B.

London, November, 1865."

In 1866 also, some "Lines on Zermatt Churchyard" appeared in *The Times* of Aug. 30, signed B,—that is, "Robert Browning," said *Notes & Queries*, 3rd Ser. xii. 246. But they are plainly not his.

'Tis in the *Athenæum* list for July 18, 1868.

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¹ p. 74. "In a late edition were collected and redistributed the pieces first published in 1842, 1845 and 1855 respectively, under the titles of "Dramatic Lyrics," "Dramatic Romances," and "Men and Women." It is not worth while to disturb this arrangement.

"Part of the Poems were inscribed to my dear friend John Kenyon: I hope the whole may obtain the honour of an association with his memory.
R. B."

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(114) A Death in the Desert ...	110	(120) A Likeness ...	1
(115) Caliban upon Setebos; or,		(121) Mr. Sludge "The Medium" ...	1
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(116) Confessions ...	148		

[The *Works* of 1868, or most of them, were reprinted in the United States in a handy double-columned form, 8 pages at a time, in the Chicago & Alton Railway Time-tables for 1872, or thereabouts.]

1868[-9]. **THE RING AND THE BOOK.** By Robert Browning, M.A.
128 Honorary Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford. In four volumes

Smith, Elder and Co., London. 1868. Blank verse. 21, 116 lines

Vol. i. I. The Ring and the Book, p. 1-74; 1416 lines. II. Half-Rome p. 75-155; 1547 lines. III. The other Half-Rome, p. 157-245; 1694 lines

Vol. ii. IV. Tertium Quid, p. 1-72; 1640 lines. V. Count Guido Franceschini, p. 73-160; 2058 lines. VI. Giuseppe Caponsacchi, p. 161-252; 2105 lines.

Vol. iii. VII. Pompilia, p. 1-89; 1845 lines. VIII. Dominus Hyacinth de Archangelis, Pauperum Procurator, p. 90-174; 1805 lines. IX. Ju Doctor Johannes-Baptista Bottinius, Fiscus et Rev. Cam. Apostol. Advocatus, p. 175-249; 1577 lines.

¹ New:

"Only the prism's obstruction shows aright
The secret of a sunbeam, breaks its light
Into the jewelled bow from blankest white;
So may a glory from defect arise:
Only by Deafness may the vexed Love wreak
Its insuppressive sense on brow and cheek,
Only by Dumbness adequately speak
As favoured mouth could never, through the eyes."

[These lines were written in 1862 for Woolner's partly-draped group of Constantine and Arthur, the deaf and dumb children of Sir Thomas Fairbairn, which was exhibited in the International Exhibition of 1862; but the lines did not appear in the *Exhibition Catalogue*.]

Vol. iv. X. The Pope, p. 1-92; 2134 lines. XI. Guido [Franceschini], p. 93-195; 2425 lines. XII. The Book and the Ring, p. 197-235; 870 lines: in all, 21,116 lines. Blank verse.

[As to dates, vol. i is in the *Athenæum* list of Nov. 21, 1868; vol. ii in that of Dec. 26; vol. iii in that of Jan. 30, 1869; and vol. iv in that of Feb. 27, 1869.]

1871. **Hervé Riel**, in *Cornhill Magazine*, March, 1871, p. 257-260.

127 Dated, "Croisic,¹ Sept. 30, 1867. Robert Browning." In 11 stanzas of from 6 lines to 21.² In all, 140 lines.

1871. **BALAUSTION'S ADVENTURE**: Including a Transcript from Euripi-

128 des.³ By Robert Browning. London: Smith, Elder & Co.

¹ "Mr. Browning dates his new poem from Le Croisic, the quaint little village whose sandbanks jut out into the Bay of Biscay near the mouth of the Loire, forming the peak of the great salt plains that stretch down from Guérande to the sea."—*Daily News*, Tuesday, Feb. 28, 1871, in a very pretty Leader on the poem.

² The rymes are, of Stanza 1. *abaaba*; 2. *cdeece dd*; 3. *faf hgh ii ghg*; 4. *jj kk ll mjm mj*; 5. *nnon pppo*; 6. *qrqrr sgsgsg tuut qvlvlg*; 7. *jj socuce ll xxho yyij*; 8. *zvvz bgbgbb fqAAfq sBBs*; 9. *CCD EEDC ddd*; 10. *FFaa gGGgss*; 11. *HHq III qJqJq KK ss*. (*Riel* rymes with *tell, hell, bell, mell*.) The measures are 4 and 2, anapests and tribrachs, varied with great skill. This spirited poem was sent to the *Cornhill*, because Browning was asked for a subscription to the Fund for sending food to Paris after the siege by the Germans in 1870-1. Tho he condemned Louis Napoleon's war, he wisht to help the French in their distress, and he sent to the Fund the £100 that Mr. George Smith gave him for *Hervé Riel*. The subject of the poem and its generous treatment surely manifolded the goodwill of the gift. An English poet restord to France its 'Forgotten Worthy.' An Englishman sang the praise of a French sailor's balking the English fleet. One of the nation whose boast is that her heroes need no other motive for their noble deeds than 'England expects every man to do his duty,' showed that in France too,—whose citizens were accused of seeking glory and vainglory as their dearest gain,—was a man who could act out Nelson's words with no thought of Nelson's end,—“A peerage or Westminster Abbey,”—but just do his duty because it lay before him, and put aside with a smile the reward offered him for doing it: a real Man, an honour to the nation and the navy of which he was part.

Mr. R. H. Shepherd has lent me a transcript, made by him in 1869, of an earlier MS version of *Hervé Riel*, with some readings less happy than those afterwards put into the poem when first printed. These follow:—

Stanza 1, line 2, *meet* for *fight*. St. 2, l. 7, *victors* for *victor*. St. 3, l. 15, *The for Then the*; l. 16, *What for Why, what*; *to pass for ships like these for have ships like these to pass*; l. 19, *narrow channel* for *single narrow*; l. 21, *With for And with*; l. 24, *water* for *or water*; l. 25, *vessel leaves the way* for *ship will leave the way*. St. 4, l. 26, *as for and*; l. 29, *All for All that's*; l. 30, *A for For a*; l. 34, *But for Let*. St. 5, l. 37, *no for But no*. St. 6, l. 51, *eve for and eve*; l. 53, *station'd* for *and anchored*; l. 54, *ships* for *fleet*; l. 55, *there's ample for me there's a*; l. 56, *the for this*; l. 59, *Keep the twenty-one by for Make the others follow*. St. 7, l. 74, *Takes for clears*. St. 8, l. 93, *the hope for hope*; l. 94, *Cry for Out burst*; l. 96, *the for France's*. St. 9: line 108 is l. 109; l. 109 is 108 with *Who for You*; l. 110 is l. 111; l. 111 is 110 with *nigh for near*. St. 10, l. 114, *And for Then*; l. 116, *And for As*; l. 120, *Bank for Point*; l. 121 and 122 are tranzposed; l. 125 is left out. St. 11, l. 128, *thing for feat*; l. 132, *What the French for All that France*; *the English for England*; l. 136, *Eye shall range for You shall look*; *it stop at for you come to*.

³ That is, an englishing of his *Alkestis*. Lady Cowper suggested the poem, and bade Browning write it. '132 is a sequel to this work.'—S.

Note the lines, 2650, &c., p. 168-170, on Sir F. Leighton's fine picture of *Alkestis*:—

"I know, too, a great Kaunian painter, strong
As Herakles, though rosy with a robe
Of grace that softens down the sinewy strength."

1871. Title, Leaf of Dedication to the Countess Cowper, with 4 lines from E. B. B. quoted on reverse, 170 pages of text, 1—170.—S. Blank verse. 2681 lines. (Out by Aug. 12.)
1871. **PRINCE HOHENSTIEL-SCHWANGAU. SAVIOUR OF SOCIETY.** By Robert
129 Browning. London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 1871. (Out by
Dec. 16.) p. i-iv, 1-148. Blank verse? 2160 lines. [On
(Louis) Napoleon III, his motives, dreams and plans.¹]
- 1872.² **FIFINE AT THE FAIR.** By Robert Browning. London: Smith,
130 Elder, and Co., 15, Waterloo Place, 1872. p. i-xii, 1-171.³
132 sections, six-measure iambic rymed couplets—ryming
Alexandrines—2342 lines, and "Epilogue. **The House-
holder:**" "Savage I was sitting in my house, late, lone⁴".
4 stanzas of 8, *abab, cdcd*. Pages i-xii consist of half-title,
title, quotation from Molière's *Don Juan* Acte 1^{re}. Scène 3^e
(p. v), an **Englishing of it** by Browning in 7 six-measure
iambic ryme-couplets, "Don Juan, might you please to help
one give a guess;" and "Prologue. **Amphibian**" (A Butterfly
at sea). "The fancy I had to-day," 19 verses of 4, alternates,
3-measure iambs. In all, 2464 lines.
1873. **RED COTTON NIGHT-CAP COUNTRY, OR TURF AND TOWERS.**⁵ By

And he has made a picture of it all.

There lies Alkestis dead, beneath the sun. . . ."

And the pretty Dedication to Lady Cowper: "... this poem absolutely owes its existence to you . . . how good and beautiful ought such a poem to be! . . . suffer that it make . . . its nearest possible approach to those Greek qualities of goodness and beauty, by laying itself gratefully at your feet!" Who says, 'What better end can ladies' beauty serve, Than to inspire poets' tongues and heroes' souls?'

¹ See, on his marriage, (56) 'A Lover's Quarrel,' st. 5.

² In 1872 came out the third "Selections from the Poetical Works of Robert Browning" [First Series]; and in or about 1872 the *Poetical Time-tables*.

³ The Poem is a man's defence to his noble wife of his admiration for a very handsome, loose, gipsy dancing-woman, and a discussion of the questions involved in the proceeding. It "is a serio-fantastic discussion on the nature of sexual love and its relation to all other modes of æsthetic life, and turns mainly on the question whether such love best fulfils itself in constancy or in change, in devotion to one object, or in the appreciation of many."—*Temple Bar*, Feb. 1873, p. 315.

⁴ These lines are 4-measure, — — — — | — — — — | — — | — ||

⁵ This poem is the story of Mellerio, the Paris Jeweller, and was studied at the place of his ending, St. Aubyn in Normandy, from the law-papers used in the suit concerning his will. It was put in type with all the true names of persons and things; but, on a proof being submitted by Browning to his friend the present Chief Justice, Lord Coleridge, then Attorney-General, the latter thought that an action for libel might lie for what was said in the poem, however unlikely it was that such procedure would be taken. Thereupon fictitious names were substituted for the real ones in every case. Next year, the appeal against the judgment in favour of the will was dismissed, and, I suppose, the matter set at rest in accordance with the ethics of the poem. I believe that Browning means to restore the true names in his next edition of the poem.

"The tale is that of a modern Ultramontane Catholic, driven into sheer madness by the conflicting emotions of illicit love which he cannot control, and hyperbolic religious devotion which he does not dare to resist."—*Daily News*, May 3, 1873.

- 131 Robert Browning. London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 15, Waterloo Place, 1873. p. i-vi, 1-282. Dated at end, p. 282, 'January 23, 1873.' Dedicated "To Miss Thackeray," since Mrs. Richmond Ritchie. Blank verse, 4247 lines.
1875. **ARISTOPHANES' APOLOGY** including a Transcript from Euripides¹
- 132 being the **LAST ADVENTURE OF BALAUCTION** By Robert Browning London Smith, Elder, and Co., 15 Waterloo Place 1875. p. i-viii, 1-366. *Aristophanes' Apology*, p. 1-208, 327-366; *Herakles* [the "Transcript from Euripides"], p. 209-327. In all, 5767 lines. Mainly blank verse, save choruses, &c.
1875. **THE INN ALBUM**. By Robert Browning. London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 15, Waterloo Place, 1875. p. i-iv, 1-211 (in 8 Sections).² Blank verse. 3078 lines.
1876. **PACCHIAROTTO** and how he worked in Distemper: with other Poems. By Robert Browning. London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 15, Waterloo Place, 1876. p. i-viii, 1-241.

¹ That is, from his tragedy of *Herakles Mainomenos*, or *Hercules Furens*.

² Germand by E. Leo, 1877. "*Das Fremdenbuch* von Robert Browning. Aus dem Englischen von E. Leo. Autorisirte Uebersetzung. Hamburg. W. Mauke Söhne, vormals Perthes-Besser & Mauke." 1877. p. i-iv, 1-176.

"... The story told by Mr. Browning in this poem is, in its main outlines, a real one, that of Lord [De Ros], once a friend of the great Duke of Wellington, and about whom there is much in the Greville *Memoirs*. The original story was, of course, too repulsive to be adhered to in all its details, of, first, the gambling lord producing the portrait of the lady he had seduced and abandoned, and offering his expected dupe, but real beater, an introduction to the lady, as a bribe to induce him to wait for payment of the money he had won; secondly, the eager acceptance of the bribe by the young gambler, and the suicide of the lady from horror at the base proposal of her old seducer. (The story made a great sensation in London, over thirty years ago. . .) Readers of the *Inn Album* know how grandly Mr. Browning has lifted the base young gambler, through the renewal of that old love which the poet has invented, into one of the most pathetic creations of modern time, and has spared the baser old *roué* the degradation of the attempt to sell the love which was once his delight, and which, in the poem, he seeks to regain, with feelings one must hope are real, as the most prized possession of his life. As to the lady, the poet has covered her with no false glory or claim on our sympathy. From the first, she was a law unto herself; she gratified her own impulses, and she reaped the fruit of this. Her seducer has made his confession of his punishment, and has attributed, instead of misery, comfort and ease to her. She has to tell him, and the young man who has given her his whole heart, that that supposed comfort and ease have been to her simply hell; and tell, too, why she still prefers that hell to the renewed temptations of her beguiler, why she cannot accept the true love that, under other conditions, would have been her way back to heaven and life. What, then, can be her end? No higher power has she ever sought. Self-contained, she has sinned and suffered. She can no more. By her own hand she ends her life, and the curtain falls on the most profoundly touching and most powerful poem of modern times. *The Inn Album* not live? It will be in men's mouths when its detractors' ashes are in the dust, and their opinions, if unearthed by any painful antiquary, looked at with wonder and contempt."—5 *Notes and Queries*, v. 244-5, March 25, 1876. (I wrote this with reference to the review of the poem in the *Spectator*, and in the hope that its reviewer in *The Academy* might be led to repent of his misapprehension of it.)

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1877. THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS, transcribed by Robert Browning.	
152 London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 15, Waterloo Place, 1877. p. i-xi (prose Forewords, v-xi), 1-148. "The gods I ask deliverance from these labours." 1748 lines. Very varied metres.	
1878. LA SAISIAZ: THE TWO POETS OF CROISIC. By Robert Browning.	
153 London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 15, Waterloo Place, 1878.	

¹ "Pisgah-Sights. 3." in *Selections*, Second Series, 1880, p. 350 is the Proem to (152) *La Saisiaz*, "Good to forgive."

² E. Barrett Browning, in "Wine of Cyprus," st. xxi, l. 8, "And the poets poured us wine."—*Works*, 1856, iii. 31.

- p. i-viii (Dedicated to Mrs. Sutherland Orr). p. 1-201. Proem, p. 3-4 ("Good, to forgive"), 2-measure. 24 lines. La Saisiaz, A. E. S., September 14, 1877¹ ("Dared and done"), p. 5-82. 618 trochaic lines. Date at end 'Nov. 9, 1877.' 642 lines.
- Proem, p. 85-6 ("Such a starved bank of moss"²), 12 lines; 3 verses of 4, *abab*, 2-measure; *a* 2 dactyls; *b* 2 spondees.
- 154 **The Two Poets of Croisic**, p. 87-191 ('Fame!' Yes, I said it and you read it), 160 stanzas of 8, *ababab cc*, 5-measure iambs: 1280 lines. Epilogue, p. 193-201 ("What a pretty tale you told me"³), 18 stanzas of 6, *abab cc*; *b* 3-measure, *a* & *c* 4-measure; trochaics, but *b* & *c* end with monosyllables. 108 lines. The three, 1400 lines. The whole volume, 2042 lines.
1879. "Oh Love, Love:" the Lyric of Euripides in his *Hippolytus*
- 155 (B.C. 428), l. 525 sqq., english: in J. P. Mahaffy's *Euripides*,—in Macmillan's Eighteen-penny Series of *Classical Writers*, Edited by John Richard Green,—1879, p. 116, *n*.

After quoting Euripides's 2 stanzas, Mr. Mahaffy says, p. 115 :
 "Mr. Browning has honoured me (Dec. 18, 1878) with the following translation of these stanzas, so that the general reader may not miss the meaning or the spirit of the ode. The English metre, though not a strict reproduction, gives an excellent idea of the original.

I.

Oh Love, Love, thou that from the eyes diffusest
 Yearning, and on the soul sweet grace inducest—
 Souls against whom thy hostile march is made—
 Never to me be manifest in ire,
 Nor, out of time and tune, my peace invade !
 Since neither from the fire—
 No, nor the stars—is launched a bolt more mighty
 Than that of Aphrodité .
 Hurl'd from the hands of Love, the boy with Zeus for sire.

II.

Idly, how idly, by the Alpheian river
 And in the Pythian shrines of Phœbus, quiver
 Blood-offerings from the bull, which Hellas heaps :
 While Love we worship not—the Lord of men !
 Worship not him, the very key who keeps
 Of Aphrodité, when
 She closes up her dearest chamber-portals :
 —Love, when he comes to mortals,
 Wide-wasting, through those deeps of woes beyond the deep !"⁴

¹ This is the date of the death of "A. E. S.," Miss Anne Egerton Smith, the Proprietress of the *Liverpool Mercury*, a great admirer of Browning's, who was at La Saisiaz with him and his sister, and whose sudden death gave rise to the Poem, in which the Soul and the Future Life, and God's dealing with man are dealt with. There was a review in her paper of *The Ring and the Book*.

² Call'd "Apparitions" in *Selections*, 1880, p. 3.

³ Call'd "A Tale" in *Selections*, 1880, p. 367.

⁴ On p. 117, Mr. Mahaffy quotes "a fragment from the *Cresphontes*, as we have it in Mr. Browning's version (*Arist. Apol.*, p. 179)." "Peace" to "banish Strife."

1879. **DRAMATIC IDYLS** by Robert Browning London Smith, Elder, and Co., 15 Waterloo Place 1879. p. i-vi, 1-143. post 8vo. 1131 lines.

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161 Ned Bratts (<i>'Twas Bedford's Special Assize</i>), rhyme-couplets : 6-measure. 326 mainly iambic and anapæstic lines. (The working of conscience : two villains converted by reading Bunyan.) ... 107	107

[On Tuesday, June 10, 1879, the Honorary degree of LL.D. was conferrd on Browning by the University of Cambridge.³]

¹ "How perfectly rightly our poet passes from the iambs in *Iván Ivánovitch* when describing the wolves coming :

'Tis the rég | ular pád | of the wólves | in pursúit | of the life | in the slédge |, &c. Sense and sound go so admirably together. One *hears* the wolves."—E. H. Hickey.

² "*Protest against Vivisection*. A memorial—signed by Sir Wm. Ferguson, Mr. Ruskin, Sir Wm. Erle, Mr. Carlyle, Mr. BROWNING, Mr. Tennyson, the Bishop of Exeter, and the Lord Chief Justice of the Common Pleas—publicly protesting against the horrible cruelties too often perpetrated under the colourable pretence of scientific vivisection, will be left on the table before the Council of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals."—*Dublin Mail*, 25 Jan. 1875.—T. W. Carson.

³ The *Cambridge Chronicle* of June 14, 1879, says : "Of Mr. Browning, the Orator [Mr. J. E. Sandys] spoke in particularly complimentary language, and after referring to his poems, as being, like Pindar's, 'vocal to the wise,' he referred in glowing terms to Mr. Browning's deep knowledge of human nature, his intellectual subtlety, and his power of psychological analysis. He also spoke of his devotion to the muse of the drama as well as to the muse of lyric verse ; to his exemplification of the power of music in 'Saul' and 'Abt Vogler,' and to the picture which he has painted of the life of the blameless painter of Florence in his twilight poem, 'Andrea del Sarto,' concluding as follows :—'Vesperì quotiens,' &c. The *Athenæum* of June 23, 1879, prints Mr. Sandys's 'felicitous eulogium' : "Quanta subtilitate ipsa corda hominum reserat, intimos mentis recessus explorat, varios animi motus perscrutatur. Quod ad tragediam antiquiorem attinet, interpretatus est, uti nostis omnes, non modo Æschylum quo nemo sublimior, sed etiam Euripidem quo nemo humanior ; quo fit ut etiam illos qui Græce nesciunt, misericordia tangat Alcestis, terrore tangat Hercules, Recentiora argumenta tragica cum lyrico quodam scribendi genere coniunxit, duas Musas et Melpomenen et Euterpen simul veneratus. Musicæ miracula quis dignius cecinit ? Pictoris Florentini sine fraude vitam quasi inter crepuscula vespertas centem coloribus quam vividis depinxit. Vesperì quotiens, dum foco adsidemus, hoc iubente resurgit Italia. Vesperì nuper, dum huius idyllia forte meditabar, Cami inter arundines mihi videbar vocem magnam audire clamantis, Πάν ὁ μύσας ὁ τῖθνηκεν. Vivit adhuc Pan ipse, cum Marathonis memoria ["*Echelos*"] et Pheidippidis velocitate immortalì consociatus."

1880.¹ **DRAMATIC IDYLS.** Second Series. By Robert Browning. London: Smith, Elder, and Co., 15, Waterloo Place, 1880. p. i-viii, 1-149, post 8vo. 1212 lines.

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(54) *On the Poet Objective and Subjective; on the Latter's Aim; on SHELLEY as Man and Poet.* By Robert Browning. (Being a Reprint of the Introductory Essay to [25 spurious] "Letters of Percy Bysshe Shelley." Moxon, 1852.) Publishd for the Browning Society, by N. Trübner & Co., 57 & 59 Ludgate Hill, London, 1881, p. 1-20. 564 lines. Pages 3-4 contain A Foretalk by F. J. Furnivall; p. 5-19 the Essay; p. 19-20 the Prospectus of the Browning Society (by F. J. F.), dated 27 July, 1881.

BROWNING'S PRINTED LETTERS.

1841. Letter to Laman Blanchard [?April, 1841], dated "Craven Cottage, Saturday," and signed "Robert Browning.²" Printed in the Memoir, by Blanchard Jerrold, prefixed to *The Poetical Works of Laman Blanchard*. Lond. Chatto & Windus, 1876, pp. 6-8.—S.

[1845.] Letter to Henry Fothergill Chorley, on his novel of *Pomfret*.

[1860.] " " " on his novel of *Roccabella*.³
Printed in the "Autobiography, Memoir and Letters of Henry
Fothergill Chorley, compiled by Henry G. Hewlett." Lond.
Bentley, 1873, vol. ii. pp. 25-26; 169-174.—S.

¹ In 1880 was published "Selections from the Poetical Works of Robert Browning, Second Series. London Smith, Elder and Co., 15 Waterloo Place 1880." See p. 79-80.

² It "describes his journey from Camberwell to Bond Street, in quest of the 'Offerings.'"—*Memoir*, p. 6.—T. W. Carson.

³ Pref. p. vii, Thanks to R. B. for leave to print letters. i. 212, Intimacy with R. B.—T. W. Carson.

1846. Letter to R. H. Horne, dated Pisa, Dec. 4 [1846], in "Letters of E. B. B. to R. H. Horne," ed. S. R. T. Mayer, 1877, vol. ii, p. 182-3. Another, dated London, Sept. 24 [1851], written by E. B. B. "for Robert as well as myself, and signd [? by her] 'Robert and Elizabeth Barrett Browning.'"—*ib.* p. 194-5.
1849. Letter to William Etty, R.A., dated "Bagni di Lucca, Sept. 21, 1849," and signed "Robert Browning." Printed in the "Life of William Etty, R.A. By Alexander Gilchrist" (Lond. 1855), vol. ii. pp. 280-81.—S.
1857. A Letter from Robert Browning¹ to Leigh Hunt (dated Bagni di Lucca, 6th October, 1857),—is printed in *The Correspondence of Leigh Hunt, edited by his Eldest Son*. London: Smith and Elder, 1862, vol. ii. pp. 274-67.—S.
1871. Letter to the Editor of *The Daily News*, dated '19, Warwick Crescent, W., Feb. 9,' and signd 'Robert Browning,' in *The Daily News* of Feb. 10, 1871, saying that his contribution to the French Relief Fund was his publishers' payment for a lyrical poem [*Hervé Riel*], and not for *The Ring and the Book*.—T. W. C.
1874. Letter to the Editor of *The Daily News*, dated, Nov. 20, in *Daily News*, Nov. 21, 1874. Reprinted above, p. 56.
1875. Letter to the Rev. Alexander B. Grosart, on the poem of *The Lost Leader* and Wordsworth, dated "19 Warwick-crescent, Feb. 24, 1875" and signed "Robert Browning." Printed on p. xxxvii. of the Editor's Preface, prefixed to the first volume of "The Prose Works of William Wordsworth. Edited by the Rev. A. B. Grosart." London: Edward Moxon, Son and Co., 1876.—S.
1877. The Lord Rectorship of St. Andrew's. Letter to the Editor of *The Times*, dated "19 Warwick-crescent, Nov. 19," and signed "Robert Browning," saying that directly he had been told of his nomination as a candidate, he wrote to decline the honour, "as I had found myself compelled to do on some former occasions."—*Times*, Tuesday, November 20, 1877.—S.
1878. Letter to F. J. F. in *The Academy*, Dec. 20, 1878, saying that he (R. B.) always took Mrs. Browning's line on Chaucer, "That mark upon his lips is wine" (*Vision of Poets*, 1844), "to be a proof of the geniality and joviality of Chaucer."
1881. Letter—in the PIGSBROOK AND Co. Controversy—to Mr. J. Orchard Halliwell Philipps, not meant for printing, and printed by Mr. Hl-P., without the writer's leave, in Jan. or Feb. 1881.

¹ The Postscript is signed Elizabeth Barrett Browning. On p. 268-271 is a Letter to Mr. and Mrs. Browning, signed Leigh Hunt. In vol. i, p. 316, is also a Letter to Robert Browning, dated 'Chelsea, 15 April' [1839], signed Leigh Hunt. See also the Preface, vol. i, p. vii.—T. W. Carson.

APPENDIX.

- I. THE "SELECTIONS" FROM BROWNING'S WORKS.
- II. THE CHANGED-RYME AND FRESH LINES IN *SORDELLO*, 1863.
- III. SAMPLE OF THE END-CHANGED, FRESH, AND LEFT-OUT LINES
IN "PARACELsus," eds. 1835 & 1863.
- IV. TRIAL-LIST OF CRITICISMS AND NOTICES OF BROWNING'S WORKS.
- V. PERSONAL NOTICES.

I.

1863. SELECTIONS | FROM THE | POETICAL WORKS | OF | ROBERT BROWNING. | London : | Chapman and Hall, 193, Piccadilly, 1863.
[Made by John Forster (author of the *Life of Goldsmith*, &c. &c.), "whom I am proud to call my friend."—Dedication to *Strafford*, p. 18, above,—and the poet Bryan Waller Procter (Barry Cornwall), to whom *Colombe's Birthday* was dedicated, a very old friend, whom Browning, when in town, visited Sunday by Sunday till his death.] p. i-xii, 1-411. 16mo.

PREFACE.

'This volume is published with Mr. Browning's sanction ; but for the choice of the particular pieces he is in no respect responsible.

'The rule observed in the Selections has been to avoid giving mere fragments. Everything is presented, as far as was found practicable, in a complete form.

'Mr. Browning's leading poems, "Paracelsus," "Sordello," and "Christmas Eve and Easter Day," appear by such portions only as could be so detached that they should possess an independent and intelligible interest. His dramas, "Strafford," "Pippa Passes," "King Victor and King Charles," "The Return of the Druses," "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon," "Colombe's Birthday," and "Luria," are represented each by separate acts or scenes, constituting pictures of character in themselves complete. His "Dramatic Lyrics," and "Men and Women," have been laid under contribution exclusively for poems without omission or abridgment.

'The volume originated with two friends, who, from the first appearance of "Paracelsus," have regarded its writer as among the few great poets of the century ; who have seen this opinion, since, gain ground with the best readers and critics ; and who believe that such a selection as the present may go far to render it universal.

'The manner of an original writer, always marked and peculiar, often prevents his general acceptance, until the novelty has worn off. This, for the most part, is what is meant when certain forms of poetical genius are said to be too subtle for immediate enjoyment. Friendships likely to be lasting, are

seldom formed suddenly. But good service is done when such difficulties are, as far as possible, helped away. It is believed that this little book, by the range and variety of power it brings at once under view, will arrest, without overstraining, the attention of many readers; and, by making less novel and unfamiliar to them the style of a thoroughly original poet, will open to them sooner the full enjoyment of a series of writings as remarkable as any that have enriched the literature of our time.'

'November, 1862.'

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¹ I. "Presume not to serve God apart from such," p. 16, ed. 1835, to "Where these must be displayed," p. 24, *ib.*

² II. "Stay with us, Aureole!" p. 34, *ib.*, to "Festus I plunge!" p. 41, *ib.*

[1863, iii. 31, line 832, adds, "Fest. We wait you when you rise!"]

³ III. "Par. Heap logs, and let the blaze laugh out," p. 72, ed. 1835, to "Or in my fortunes," p. 78, *ib.*

⁴ III. "And you saw Luther," p. 119, *ib.*, to end of III, "Will you not call me to your side, dear friend?" [N.B. "Friend," for Browning's "Aureole," ed. 1835, p. 123; and 1863, iii. 94.]

⁵ IV. "Shall one like me," p. 151, ed. 1835 (iii. 117, ed. 1863), to end of IV: "About to perish for your sport. . . Behold!" p. 156, ed. 1835. [In Paracelsus's answer, "And soon. Oporinus," p. 111, the *Selections* have "soon" for Browning's "quickly."] *quickerly*]

⁶ V. "Festus, my own friend, you are come at last," p. 172, ed. 1835, to "But [Browning, 'Which'] glideth out to music sweet and low," p. 176, ed. 1835; iii. 136, ed. 1863.

Three words of a *Selections* alteration Browning adopts in 1863, iii. 135.

1835. "I shall dream else. Speak on!" [1863] "ay, leaning so!" But the *Selections* additions to the first two lines of his song he does not adopt:

Br. "Thus the Mayne glideth

Where my love abideth." 1835 & 1863.

Sel. "Softly the Mayne river glideth

Close by where my Love abideth." 1862, p. 116.

⁷ V. "I failed: I gazed on power till I grew blind," p. 195, ed. 1835, to end of V, "and this was Paracelsus."

(6') SORDELLO.

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¹ "Pippa is a girl from a Silk-factory, whose 'Passing' the various persons of the Play, at certain critical moments, in the course of her holiday, becomes, unconsciously to herself, a determining influence on the fortune of each. At Asolo in the Trevisan."

From "I.—Morning. Up the Hill-side . . ." *Seb. (sings) Let the watching lids wink!* iii. 9, ed. 1863, to p. 21, "Not to me, God—to him be merciful!"

² "Victor Amadeus, King of Sardinia, having abdicated in favour of his Son, Charles Emanuel, determines, on the subsidence of the political dangers which suggested that step, to resume his dignity, in reliance upon the Duty of his Son, the Insignificance of his Daughter-in-law, and the Obsequiousness of his old Minister, D'Ormea. For this purpose he proceeds to Rivoli Palace, near Turin, during the presumed absence of the new King." From *King Charles*, Part I, "Vic. Sure I heard voices," iii. 113, ed. 1863, to end of Part I, "No praise, at least, Polyxena—no praise," p. 123, *ib.*

³ "In an Island colonized by the Druses, and garrisoned by the Knights-Hospitallers, Djabal has announced himself as the expected Hakeem and Deliverer of his people. Anael, his love, having, in attestation of her faith in this, slain the Prefect, their oppressor, receives the avowal of her lover's Imposture, and declares it to the Nuncio succeeding to the Tyranny of his predecessor, just as the Venetian succours, invited by Djabal, are about to arrive. Loys de Dreux, a young Knight, friendly to Djabal, loves Anael also."

⁴ "Henry, Earl of Mertoun, having waited on Thorold, Lord Tresham, to solicit the hand of his sister Mildred, her cousin Guendolen communicates the result."

⁵ "The Courtiers of Colombe, Duchess of Juliers and Cleves, learn that her Duchy is claimed by Prince Berthold." Act I. p. 276, vol. ii. ed. 1863, to l. 6, p. 281, "Will we, Sir Maufroy?" Then "The Claimant of the Duchy, and rightful Duke, Prince Berthold, proposes to marry Colombe; and the advocate Valence, to whom had been entrusted the cause of defending her possession, and who secretly loves her, communicates the proposal." And extract from Act IV, p. 326, vol. ii, ed. 1863. "Val. So must it be," to p. 337, l. 2, "And all's at darkest now. Impossible!"

⁶ 1. ("Braccio, Commissary of the Republic, speaks of Florence and her Generals.") From Act I, p. 363, vol. ii, ed. 1863, "Lapo, there's one thing plain and positive," to p. 364, *ib.*, "Stand firm where every famed precursor fell?"

2. ("The Moorish General in service of the Florentines anticipates Peace.") "I wonder, do you guess why I delay," p. 369, *ib.*, to p. 370, "Well, 'tis not sure the quiet lasts for ever." 3. ("A Country's right to Individual service and sacrifice.") "Lur. They are right then to try me?" Act II, p. 392, *ib.*, to p. 395: "The fire! So, Braccio, Luria, which is best?" 4. ("Luria, with Florence in his power, takes his Revenge.") Act IV. "Hus. . . Take revenge," p. 407, *ib.*, to end of Act IV. "I drink this, and ere night,—die—Strange!"

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1865. MOXON'S MINIATURE POETS. A SELECTION FROM THE WORKS OF ROBERT BROWNING. London: Edward Moxon and Co., Dover Street, 1865. Square post 8vo.

"It is the wish of Messrs Chapman and Hall, who now publish my poems, that a little gathering from the lightest of these should be tied together after the pretty device of my old publishers, Messrs Moxon. Not a single piece here belongs to the Selection already issued by the former gentlemen, which was, perhaps, a fair sample of the ground's ordinary growth; this, such as it may prove, contentedly looks pale beside the wonderful flower-show of my illustrious predecessor¹—dare I say? my dear friend: who will take it, all except the love in the gift, at a mere nosegay's worth.

"London, March 21, 1865."

R. B."

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¹ Alfred Tennyson,—a Selection from whose Works opened the series of Moxon's *Miniature Poets*.—S.

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1872. A Selection from the Works of Robert Browning. With a Memoir of the Author and Explanatory Notes. For the Use of Schools and Private Tuition. Edited by F. H. Ahn, Ph. Dr. Leipzig, Ernst Fleischer, 1872.

1872. SELECTIONS | FROM | THE POETICAL WORKS | OF | ROBERT BROWNING. | London: | Smith, Elder & Co., 15, Waterloo Place. | 1872. | p. i-xii, 1-348. 8vo.¹ [First Series.]

¹ The Tauchnitz Selection of 1872, called "The Poetical Works of Robert Browning," vols. 1197, 1198 of the "Collection of British Authors," contains: vol. i, p. 1-6 half-title, Portrait, title and contents; (52) *A Soul's Tragedy*, p. 7-43; (51) *Luria*, p. 45-108; (53) *Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day* ('Florence, 1850'), p. 109-188; *Men and Women* ('London and Florence, 184—185—') only the 12 under that title in the '68 edition—(102) Transcendentalism, (76) A Contemporary, (17) Artemis, (64) Karshish, (4) Agricola, (35) Pictor Ignotus, (60) Fra Lippo, (82) Andrea del Sarto, (32) Bishop's Tomb, (80) Blougram, (94) Cleon, (19) Rudel, (104) One Word More,—altering *Karshook* to *Karshish* in § 14,—p. 189-292. 1s. 6d. vol. ii. half-title, Title and Contents, p. 1-5; (88) *In a Balcony* ('Bagno di Lucca, 1853'), p. 7-38; *Dramatis Personæ* ('London, 1864'); *Dramatic Romances*, p. 199-320.—(14) French Camp, (78) Patriot, (12) Last Duchess, (13) Count Gismond, (81) Boy and Angel (complete), (68) Instans Tyrannus, (65) Mesmerism, (50) Glove, (49) Time's Revenges, (36) Italian in England, (37) Englishman in Italy, (16) Gondola, (18) Waring, (95) Twins, (72) Light Woman, (77) Last Ride, (22) Pied Piper, (33) Flight of the Duchess (all: a, b), (99) Grammarian's Funeral, (97) Heretic's Tragedy.—1s. 6d. Both a cheap Selection from Browning's Works and a cheap double-column Edition of them are sadly wanted in England.

"Dedicated to ALFRED TENNYSON. In Poetry—illustrious and consummate: In Friendship—Noble and sincere."

[*Forewords*] "In the present selection from my poetry, there is an attempt to escape from the embarrassment of appearing to pronounce upon what myself may consider the best of it. I adopt another principle; and by simply stringing together certain pieces on the thread of an imagined personality, I present them in succession, rather as the natural development of a particular experience than because I account them the most noteworthy portion of my work. Such an attempt was made in the volume of selections from the poetry of Elizabeth Barrett Browning [see p. 61, note ², above]: to which—in outward uniformity, at least—my own would venture to become a companion.

"A few years ago, had such an opportunity presented itself, I might have been tempted to say a word in reply to the objections my poetry was used to encounter. Time has kindly co-operated with my disinclination to write the poetry and the criticism besides. The readers I am at last privileged to expect, meet me fully half-way; and if, from the fitting standpoint, they must still "censure me in their wisdom," they have previously "awakened their senses that they may the better judge." Nor do I apprehend any more charges of being wilfully obscure, unconscientiously careless, or perversely harsh. Having hitherto done my utmost in the art to which my life is a devotion, I cannot engage to increase the effort; but I conceive that there may be helpful light, as well as reassuring warmth, in the attention and sympathy I gratefully acknowledge.

R. B."

"London, May 14, 1872."

[This book is, in the main, a reproduction of the *Selections* of 1865.]

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1880.¹ SELECTIONS FROM | THE POETICAL WORKS | OF ROBERT BROW-
ING | Second Series | London | Smith, Elder, & Co., 15
Waterloo Place | 1880 |

¹ 1877. [Selections in Osgood's U. S. A. 'Vest-Pocket Series of Standard and Popular Authors.' 16mo.]
Favorite Poems. By Robert Browning. Illustrated. Boston: James R. Osgood and Company, Late Ticknor & Fields, and Fields, Osgood, & Co. 1877, p. i-viii, 9-96, with 7 poor woodcuts, paged.

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The "Lyrics of Life. Illustrated. With Portrait. 75 cents: Paper, 50 cents, advertised at the end of this vol. among Browning's Works," is not in the British Museum. It is a short set of Selections, I assume. The other books in the list, all 16mo, 1½ dollars a volume, are, Poems and Dramas, 2 vols. Sordello; Strafford; Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day, 1 vol. Dramatis Personæ, 1 vol. Men and Women, 1 vol. The Ring and the Book, 2 vols. Balaustion's Adventure, 1 vol. Fiffine at the Fair; Prince Hohenstiel Schwangau; Hervé Riel, 1 vol. Red-Cotton Night-Cap Country, 1 vol. Aristophanes' Apology, 1 vol. The Inn Album, 1 vol. Paçhiarotto, 1 vol. Complete Works, 13 vols. Cloth, \$19. 50. The List quotes undated opinions on Br.'s works from the *London Examiner*, Bp. Gilbert Haven, James Russell Lowell, *London Athenæum*, *Westminster Review*, *New York Graphic*, and *Boston Advertiser*.

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II. CHANGED RYMES AND FRESH LINES IN *SORDELLO*,

Books I-VI, ed. 1863, 1868.

BOOK I.

ed. 1840.	ed. 1863, vol. iii.	ed. 1868, vol. ii.
p. 13.	p. 262.	p. 13
... men's flesh is meant ...	<i>the mans flesh went</i>	
<i>Ecelin</i> lifts two writhen hands to pray	<i>While his lord lifted writhen hands to</i>	
At Oliero's convent now : so place	pray,	
<i>For Azzo, Lion of the</i>	<i>Lost at Oliero's convent.</i>	
	Hill-cats, face	
	<i>With [68 Our] Azzo, our Guelf-Lion !</i>	

No ryme-changed or fresh line in Book II.

¹ Proem to *The Two Poets of Croisic*, p. 85.

BOOK III.

ed. 1840.

p. 97

A week since at Verona : and *she* wants
 You doubtless to contrive the marriage-
 chants
 Ere Richard storms Ferrara."

p. 102

Romano's *lord!* That Chief—her chil-
 dren too—1868, ii. 88.

p. 108

... A month since Oliero sunk
 All Ecelin that was into a Monk ;

p. 113

In "Charlemagne," *for instance*, dreamed
 divine

In every point except one *restive* line
 (Those daughters!)—what *significance*
 may lurk

In that? My life commenced before that
 work,

Continues after *it*, as on I fare

p. 113-14

To meditate with us eternal rest?
 Strike sail, slip cable! here the *galley's*
 moored.

p. 116

(*at home we* dizen scholars, chiefs and
 kings,
But in this magic weather hardly clings
The old garb gracefully: Venice, a type

ed. 1863, vol. iii.

p. 332

... and *they* want
 You doubtless to contrive the marriage-
 chant
 Ere Richard storms Ferrara."

[*New in 1863*] Here [*'68 Then*] was
 told

The tale from the beginning—how, made
 bold

By Salinguerra's absence, Guelfs had
 burned

And pillaged till he unawares returned
 To take revenge : how Azzo and his friend
 Were doing their endeavour, how the end
 Of the siege was nigh, and how the Count,
 released

From further care, would with his mar-
 riage-feast

Inaugurate a new and better rule,
 Absorbing thus Romano.

"Shall I school

p. 84

My master," added Naddo, "and suggest
 How you may clothe in a poetic vest

p. 333] These doings at Verona?

p. 337

p. 88

Mine and Romano's? Break the first
wall through,
Tread o'er the ruins of the Chief, supplant
His sons beside, still, vainest were the
vaunt:

p. 342

p. 93

A month since *at* Oliero sunk
 All that was Ecelin into a monk ;

p. 346

p. 97

In "Charlemagne," (*his poem*, dreamed
 divine

In every point except one *silly* line
 About the *restiff* daughters)—what may
 lurk

In that?" "My life commenced before
 this work,"

(*So I interpret the significance*

Of the bard's start aside and look askance
 My life continues after : on I fare

p. 347

p. 98

To meditate with us eternal rest,
 And partnership in all his life has
 found?"

'*Tis but a sailor's promise, weather-bound*
 'Strike sail, slip cable, here the bark be
 moored.

p. 349

p. 100

For, *these in evidence*, you clearer claim
 A like garb for the rest,—*grace all, the*
same
 As *these my* peasants. I ask youth and
 strength

ed. 1840.

p. 116-117

Or stay me, *thrid* her cross canals alone,
As hinder Life *what seems* the single good
Sole purpose, *one thing* to be understood
Of Life)—best, be they Peasants, be they
Queens,
Take them, I say, made happy any
means,

p. 120

A hungry sun above us, sands among

p. 127

In unexpanded infancy, assure
Yourself nor misconceive my portraiture

p. 141

What bootéd scattered brilliances? the
mind
Of any number he might hope to bind

And stamp with his own thought, how-
e'er august

If all the rest should grovel in the dust!

p. 142

With good to them as well, and he
should be

Rejoiced thereat, and if, as formerly

He sighed the merry time of life must
fleet

else why are

The great ado

p. 146

A drear vast presence-chamber roughly
set

In order for this morning's use; you met

ed. 1863, vol. iii.

ed. 1868, vol. ii.

And health for each of you, not more—at
length

Grown wise, who asked at home that the
whole race

Might add the spirit's to the body's grace,
And all be dizened out as chiefs and
bards.

But in this magic weather one discards
Much old requirement. Venice seems a
type

p. 349-50

p. 101

Or keep me to the unchoked canals alone,
As hinder Life the evil with the good
Which make up Living, rightly under-
stood.

Only, do finish something! Peasants,
queens,

Take them, made happy by whatever
means,

p. 353

p. 104¹

A hungry sun above us, sands that bring

p. 358

p. 109

In unexpanded infancy, unless . . .
But that's the story,—dull enough, con-
fess!

There might be fitter subjects to allure;
Still, neither misconceive my portraiture

BOOK IV.

p. 370

p. 120

What bootéd scattered units? here a
mind

And there, which might repay his own to
find

And stamp and use?—a few, howe'er
august

If all the rest were grovelling in the
dust!

p. 370

p. 121

With incidental good to them as well
And that mankind's delight would help
to swell

His own. So if he sighed, as formerly

p. 371

Because the merry time of life must fleet

p. 122

why the jar

Else—the ado

p. 374

p. 125

These spokesmen for the Kaiser and the
Pope

This incarnation of the People's hope,
Sordello, all the say of each was said
And Salinguerra sat, himself instead
Of these to talk with, lingered musing yet.

'Twas a drear vast presence-chamber
roughly set

In order for the morning's use; full face

¹ On p. 106 is a misprint in a rhyme: 'She shut[s]

ed. 1840.

The grim *black* twy-necked eagle

p. 149

Therefore he smiled

p. 150

Straight a meeting of old men :
[† 1868, Salinguerra's]The Lombard eagle of the azure sphere
With Italy to build in, *builds* he here ?
This deemed—the other owned upon
*advice—**A third reflected on the matter twice*

p. 152

When, as *its* Podestà
Regaled him at Vicenza, *Este*, thereWith Boniface beforehand, *each* aware
p. 152*deep sunk,*
*A very pollard mortised in a trunk*Which Arabs out of wantonness contrive
Shall dwindle, that the alien stock may
thrive

p. 153

Only, *Roman* Salinguerra screens.Heinrich *was* somewhat of the tardiest

To comprehend.

p. 154

In contracts, while *through* Arab lore,
deter

p. 156

now cringe, sue peace, but peace

ed. 1863, vol. iii.

ed. 1868, vol. ii.

The Kaiser's ominous sign-mark had
*first place,*The crowned grim twy-necked eagle
p. 376-7 p. 127-8*How his life-streams rolling arrived at*
*last**At the barrier, whence, were it once over-*
*past**They would emerge, a river to the end,*
Gathered themselves up, paused, bade fate
*befriend,**Took the leap, hung a minute at the*
*height,**Then fell back to oblivion infinite :*

Therefore he smiled.

p. 378

p. 129

Straight a meeting of old men :
“ *Old Salinguerra† dead, his heir a boy,*
“ *What if we change our ruler and decoy*
The Lombard eagle of the azure sphere,
With Italy to build in, *fix him* here
Settle the city's troubles in a trice!
For private wrong, let public good
suffice !”

p. 379

p. 130

When the Podestà
Ecelin, at Vicenza, called his friend
Tourello thither, what could be their end
But to restore the Ghibellins' late Head,
The Kaiser helping? He with most to
*dread**From vengeance and reprisal, Azzo,*
*there*With Boniface beforehand, *as* aware
p. 380 p. 131*which shrunk*
As the other prospered—mortised in his
*trunk ;**Like a dwarf palm which wanton Arabs*
*foil**Of bearing its own proper wine and oil,*
By grafting into it the stranger-vine,
Which sucks its heart out, sly and ser-
pentine

p. 381

p. 132

“ *Only, why is it Salinguerra screens*
Himself behind Romano?—him we bade
Enjoy our shine i' the front, nor seek the
shade !”—*Asked* Heinrich, somewhat of the
tardiest

To comprehend.

p. 382

p. 133

In contracts *with him*, while, *since* Arab
lore*Holds the stars' secret—take one trouble*
*more**And master it ! 'Tis done, and now deter*
p. 383 p. 134*now cringe for peace, sue peace*

G 2

ed. 1840.

At price of *all advantage* ; therefore cease
The fortunes of Romano !

p. 158

'Twas leaned in the embrasure *presently*

p. 165

Enormous water current, *his sole track*

p. 167

As though it bore a *burden, which could*
tame

p. 171

And structures that inordinately glow

ed. 1863.

At price of *past gain, bar of fresh increase*
To the fortunes of Romano.

p. 385

'Twas leaned in the embrasure *absently*

p. 391

Enormous watercourse *which guides him*
back

p. 393

As though it bore *up, helped some half-*
orbed flame

p. 396

New structures, that inordinately glow,
Subdued, brought back to harmony, made
*ripe**By many a relic of the archetype**Extant for wonder ; every upstart church**That hoped to leave old temples in the*
lurch

ed. 1868, vol. ii.

p. 136

p. 142

p. 144

p. 147

BOOK V (collated by the Rev. T. W. Carson).

p. 173-4

He that sprawls

On aught but a stibadium *suffers . . .*
goose,

Puttest our lustral vase to such an use ?

p. 175

And Rome's *accomplished !* Better (say
you) merge

At once all workmen in the demiurge,

All epochs in a life-time, *and all tasks*In one : *undoubtedly* the city basks

p. 176

Sordello, wake !

p. 398

He that sprawls

On aught but a stibadium . . . *what his*
dues

Who puts the lustral vase to such an use ?

p. 400

That *way was* Rome built. "Better,
(say you) merge

At once all workmen in the demiurge,

All epochs in a life-time, *every task*In one ! " So should the *sudden city bask*

p. 401

"Sordello, wake !

*God has conceded two sights to a man—**One, of men's whole work, time's com-*
*pleted plan,**The other of the minute's work, man's*
*first**Step to the plan's completeness : what's*
*dispersed**Save hope of that supreme step which,*
*descried**Earliest, was meant still to remain*
*untried**Only to give you heart to take your own*
Step, and there stay—leaving the rest
alone ?

Where is the Vanity ?

p. 402

An elder poet in the younger's place.—

Nina's *the* strength—but Alcamo's *the*
*grace :*Each neutralizes each then ! Search your
fill ;

You get no whole and perfect Poet—still

Where is the Vanity ?

p. 177-8

An elder poet's in the younger's place—

Take Nina's strength—but lose Alcamo's
*grace ?*Each neutralizes each then ! gaze your
*fill ;*Search further, *and the past presents you*
*still*New Ninas, *new* Alcamas, time's mid-
*night*Concluding,—better say *its* evenlight*Of yesterday. You, now, in this respect*New Ninas, Alcamos, *till* time's mid-
*night**Shrouds all—or better say, the shutting*
*light**Of a forgotten yesterday. Dissect*

ed. 1840.

Of benefitting people (to reject
The favour of your fearful ignorance
A thousand phantasms eager to advance,

Refer you but to those within your reach)

Were you the first who *got, to use plain*
speech,

The Multitude to be materialized ?

p. 180

The couple there alone help Gregory ?

Hark—from the hermit Peter's *thin sad*
cry

p. 181

trail plenteous o'er the ground
Vine-like, produced by joy and sorrow,
whence

Unfeeling and yet feeling, strongest
thence :

p. 183

Rather than doing these : *now*—fancy's
trade

[Is ended, mind, nor one half may evade]

p. 191

And round those three the People formed
a ring,

Suspended their own vengeance, chose
await

p. 194

Now, whether he came near or kept aloof,

Those forms unalterable first to last
Proved him her copy, not the protoplast

p. 196.

Will dawn above us. *But so much to*
win
Ere that ! A lesser round of steps within
The last.

p. 197

Which *evil is, which good,* if I allot
Your Hell, the Purgatory, Heaven ye wot,

p. 201

Say there's a *thing* in prospect, must
disgrace

ed. 1863.

Every ideal workman—(to reject
In favour of your fearful ignorance
The thousand phantasms eager to ad-
vance,

And point you but to those within your
reach)—

Were you the first who *brought*—(in
modern speech)

The Multitude to be materialized ?

p. 404

Do the popes coupled there help Gregory
Alone ? Hark from the hermit Peter's
cry.

p. 405

trail o'er the ground—
Shall I say, gourd-like ?—not the flower's
display

Nor the root's prowess, but the plenteous
way

O' the plant—produced by joy and
sorrow, whence

Unfeeling and yet feeling, strongest
thence ?

p. 406

Rather than doing these, *in days gone by.*
But all is changed the moment you descry
Mankind as half yourself,—then fancy's
trade [&c.]

p. 414

And round those three the people formed
a ring,

Of visionary judges whose award
He recognized in full—faces that barred
Henceforth return to the old careless life,
In whose great presence, therefore, his
first strife

For their sake must not be ignobly fought,
All these at once approved of him, he
thought,

Suspended their own vengeance, chose
await

p. 416

Now whether he came near or kept aloof
The several forms he longed to imitate,
Not there the kingship lay, he sees too late,
Those forms, unalterable first as last,
Proved him her copier, not the proto-
plast.

p. 418

Will dawn above us ! *All then is to*
win
Save that ! How much for me, then ?
Where begin
My work ?

p. 418

Which *sinner is, which saint,* if I allot
Hell, Purgatory, Heaven, a blaze or blot

p. 422

Say there's a *prize* in prospect, must
disgrace

ed. 1840.

Betide competitors? An obscure place

p. 202 this badge alone
Makes you Romano's Head—the *Lombard's Curb*
Turns on your neck which would, on mine, disturb

p. 204
From wandering after his heritage
Lost once and lost for aye—*what could engage*
That deprecating glance?

p. 212 a spark
I' the stone, and whirl of some loose embossed *thong*
That crashed against the angle aye so long

BOOK VI (collated by the Rev. T. W. Carson).

p. 221
That buckler's lined with many a Giant's beard
Ere long, *Porphyrio*, be the lance *but* reared,

p. 222
Lances barefoot Agathon.

Oh, people, urge
Your claims! for thus he ventured to the verge

p. 223
—Buds blasted, but of breaths more like perfumes
Than Naddo's staring nosegay's carrion blooms.

p. 225
Or might impede *that* Guelf rule, *it* *behoved*
You, for the Then's sake, hate what *now* you loved,

p. 240
Exciting discontent, *had* surest quelled
The Body if aspiring it rebelled.¹

p. 248-9
You hear its one tower left, a belfry, toll—

ed. 1863.

Betide competitors, *unless they style*
Themselves Romano? Were it worth my while
To try my own luck! But an obscure place

p. 423 "This badge alone
Makes you Romano's Head—*becomes super*
On your *bare* neck, which would, on mine, disturb

p. 425
From wandering after his heritage
Lost once and lost for aye—*and why that rage,*
That deprecating glance?

p. 431 a spark
I' the stone, and whirl of some loose embossed *throng*
That crashed against the angle aye so long

p. 438
That buckler's lined with many a giant's beard
Ere long, *O champion*, be the lance *up-*reared,

p. 439
Lames barefoot Agathon: *this felled, we'll try*
The picturesque achievements by and by—Next life!

Ay, rally, mock, oh People, urge
Your claims!—for thus he ventured, to the verge

p. 440
—Buds blasted, but of breath more like perfume
Than Naddo's staring nosegay's carrion bloom:

p. 441
Or might impede *the* Guelf rule, *must be moved*
Now, for the Then's sake,—*hating* what you loved,

p. 454
Exciting discontent, *or surelier* quell
The body if, aspiring, it rebel?

p. 461
You hear its one tower left, a belfry, toll—

¹ In p. 246, as occasionally elsewhere, Browning treats the inflectional *s* as nothing in his rymes:

The life-cord prompt enough whose last fine threads
You fritter: so, presiding his board-head

p. 251 A tree that covets fruitage and yet tastes
Never itself, itself—had he embraced

They are not changed in the *Works* of 1863, p. 459, p. 463, or in the *Works* of 1868, p. 211, p. 215.

*The earthquake spared it last year,
laying flat
The modern church beneath,—no harm
in that!*

Cherups the contumacious grasshopper,

Cherups the contumacious grasshopper,

III. SAMPLE OF THE END-CHANGED, FRESH, AND LEFT-OUT LINES IN "*PARACELsus*," eds. 1835 & 1863.

BY THE REV. T. W. CARSON.

ed. 1835.

pp. vii-ix. Introduction in prose [p. 38, above].

p. 1. Scene Würtzburg; a garden in the environs, 1507.

p. 3. Those creaking trees bent with their fruit—and see

p. 3. Shall vex that ash that overlooks the rest,

p. 4. but you
Shall be reminded to predict some great

p. 4. Success to me.
The beings I best love so well shut in

p. 5. Itself in them—assured how well they are.

p. 5. One scarce aware of all the joys he quits.

p. 5. And when he learns
That every common sight he can enjoy

p. 6. He may convince himself, that, knowing this,

p. 7. Oh you shall
Be very proud one day! . . . say on, dear friend,
Talk volumes, I shall still be in arrears.

FEST. In truth? 'Tis for my proper peace, indeed,
Rather than yours—for vain it looks to seek
To stay your course—the last hopes I conceived
Are fading even now. Old stories tell

p. 8. —and still desist
No whit from projects where they have no part.

PAR. Alas! as I forbode, this weighty talk
Has for its end no other than to revive . . .

FEST. A solitary briar, &c.

p. 8. I would have lived their life, and striven their strife—

ed. 1863, vol. iii.

Omitted.

p. 1. Scene, Würtzburg; a garden in the environs, 1512.

p. 2. Nor blame those creaking trees bent with their fruit,

p. 3. Shall vex that ash which overlooks you both,

pp. 3, 4. but you
Shall be reminded to predict to me

Some great success!
p. 4. The beings I love best, shut in so well.

p. 4. Itself in them, assured how well they fare.

p. 4. One scarce aware of all the joys I quit,

p. 5. When Festus learns
That every common pleasure of the world

p. 5. He may convince himself that, this in view,

p. 6. Oh, one day
You shall be very proud! Say on, dear friends!

FEST. In truth? 'Tis for my proper peace, indeed,
Rather than yours: for vain all projects seem
To stay your course: I said my latest hope
Is fading even now. A story tells.

p. 6. —and yet desist
No whit from projects where repose nor love

Have part.
PAR. Once more! Alas! as I forbode.

FEST. A solitary briar, &c.

p. 7. I would have lived their life, and died their death,

1835.

Eluding Destiny, *if that might be—*

9. FEST. When you shall
Have learn'd my purpose . . .

PAB. *Learn'd it? I can say
Beforehand all this conference will
produce.*

p. 9. Of our belief in what is man's true
end

And God's *apparent* will—no two
faiths *ever*

Agreed as *ours* agree: next, each
allows

*These points are no mere visionary
truths:*

*But, once determin'd, it remains
alone*

*To act upon them straight as best
we may:*

p. 10. The path which God's will seems
to authorize—

*A broad plan: vague and ill-
defined enough,*

*But courting censure and im-
ploring aid.*

Well, he discerns, &c.

p. 10. That we devote ourselves *wholly*
to God

Is *in a life as though* no God
there were:

p. 11. —or *find out*
How else they may be satiated:
but this

Ambiguous warfare wearies . . .

FEST. *Not so much*

p. 11. PAB. Choose your *party:*

p. 12. Nor shrink when they point on-
ward—nor *spy out*.

pp. 12, 13. Am I aware your passionate
heart *has* long

Nourish'd, and *has* at length
matured, *a plan*

*To give yourself up wholly to one
end.*

I will not speak of Einsiedeln;
'twas as

I *had been* born your elder by
some years.

p. 13. As you had your own soul: ac-
cordingly

*I could go further back, and trace
each bough*

Of this wide-branching tree even

ed. 1863, vol. iii.

*Lost in their ranks, eluding
destiny:*

p. 7. FEST. When you *deign*
To hear my purpose . . .

PAB. *Hear it? I can say
Beforehand all this evening's con-
ference!*

pp. 7, 8. Of our *best scheme of life*, what
is man's end,

And *what* God's will; no two
faiths *e'er* agreed

As *his with mine*. Next, each
of us allows

*Faith should be acted on as best
we may:*

p. 8. The path which God's will seems
to authorize:

Well, he discerns, &c.

p. 8. That we devote ourselves to God,
is *seen*

In living just as if no God there
were;

p. 9. —Say *how soon*
*Power satiates these, or lust or
gold; I know*
*The world's cry well, and how to
answer it!*

But this ambiguous warfare . . .
FEST. Wearies so.

p. 9. PAB. Choose your *side*,

p. 9. Nor shrink when they point on-
ward, nor *espy*,

p. 10. Am I aware your passionate heart
long *since*

*Gave birth to, nourished, and at
length matures*

*This scheme. I will not speak
of Einsiedeln,*

Where I was born your elder by
some years.

p. 10. As you had your own soul *and*
those intents

- | | |
|---|--|
| l. 1835. | ed. 1863, vol. iii. |
| Which fill'd <i>you</i> . | Which filled <i>it</i> . |
| . 13. A portion of his lore—and not the
dullest | p. 10. A portion of his lore : and not
<i>one youth</i> |
| p. 13, 14. Now, <i>just as well have I</i>
<i>descried the growth</i>
Of this new ardour which sup-
plants the old : | p. 10. Now, this new ardour which sup-
plants the old, |
| . 15. This purpose, with the sages of
<i>old Time,</i> | p. 11. This purpose, with the sages of
<i>the Past,</i> |
| . 15. Devotion <i>shall</i> sustain or <i>shall</i>
<i>undo</i> you : | p. 12. Devotion <i>to</i> sustain you or <i>betray</i> ; |
| <i>This you intend.</i> | <i>Thus you aspire.</i> |

IV. TRIAL-LIST OF CRITICISMS AND NOTICES OF BROWNING'S WORKS, &c.

Mainly from Mr. Shepherd's (—S) and Mr. Carson's (—C) MS. or materials. The opinions exprest under C are mine.—F. J. F.)

833. W. J. Fox reviewed *Pauline* in 'The Monthly Magazine,' New Series, vol. vii. p. 254-262. See the quotation, p. 41 above, in the note.
835. (John Forster, in) 'The Examiner,' Sept. 6, 1835, p. 563-5, on *Paracelsus*. "It is some time since we read a work of more unequivocal power than this. We conclude that its author is a young man, as we do not recollect his having published before. If so, we may safely predict for him a brilliant career, if he continues true to the present promise of his genius. He possesses all the elements of a fine poet."
835. 'Monthly Repository,' November, No. 107, p. 716-727, review of *Paracelsus* [by W. J. Fox].
836. (John Forster) 'New Monthly Magazine,' March, vol. xlv. No. clxxxiii. p. 289-308. "Evidences of a New Genius for Dramatic Poetry.—No. 1." On '*Paracelsus*. By Robert Browning.' "This is the simple and unaffected title of a small volume, which was published some half-dozen months ago, and which opens a deeper vein of thought, of feeling, and of passion, than any poet has attempted for years. Without the slightest hesitation we name Mr. Robert Browning at once with Shelley, Coleridge, Wordsworth (p. 289). . . Mr. Browning is a man of genius, he has in himself all the elements of a great poet, philosophical as well as dramatic" (p. 290). . .
836. J. Heraud. 'Fraser's Magazine,' March. "Asinari Scenici," p. 363-374, are on *Paracelsus*.
836. [Two] Sonnets to the Author of *Paracelsus*. 'New Monthly Magazine' (London: Henry Colburn), September, 1836 (vol. xlviii. p. 48).—S.
837. 'Edinburgh Review,' July, No. 123, vol. lxxv. p. 132-151, on *Strafford*. Fault-finding, with a little patronising.
837. For Macready's production of Browning's *Strafford*, at Drury Lane, on May 1, see his (Macready's) 'Reminiscences,' ed. Pollock, 1875, ii. 54-67, and the Daily and other Papers of the time. There are many short notices of Br. in vol. ii.
837. Browning's *Strafford*, a Tragedy. 'Edinburgh Review,' July 1837 (vol. lxxvi. pp. 132-151).—S.
840. 'Revue des deux Mondes.' 4^{me} Série. Tome xxii. 1^{er} Avril 1840, p. 127-133. Philarette Chasles on *Paracelsus*, in an article "De l'art dramatique et du Théâtre actuel en Angleterre. École Sentimentale.—École Métaphysique.—École Archaïque. Sheridan Knowles.—Robert Browning.—Henri Horne.—Leigh Hunt.—Edouard Lytton Bulwer." '*Paracelse*, œuvre qui porte, comme on le voit, toutes les traces d'un esprit supérieur, mais . . . ne se rapproche du drame que par son titre.'

1841. Alfred Domett's Lines to R. B., 1841, on a wretched reviewer of *Pippa Passes*: see under 1877, p. 103, below.
1842. Charles Dickens on Browning's tragedy of *The Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, in a letter to John Forster, dated 25th Nov. 1842. See Forster's 'Life of Charles Dickens,' Book iv. § i.—S. It is full of the warmest praise.
1843. For Macready's production of Browning's *Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, at Drury Lane, on Feb. 11, see Macready's 'Reminiscences,' ed. Pollock, 1875.
1844. 'A New Spirit of the Age.'¹ Edited by R. H. Horne, author of 'Orion.' London: Smith, Elder and Co., 1844. The section devoted to Robert Browning occupies pp. 153-186 of the second volume. The notice is accompanied by a portrait engraved by J. C. Armytage, with facsimile of the poet's autograph.—S.
1846. Walter Savage Landor's 14-line blank-verse Poem "CCCXIII. To Robert Browning," in *Works*, 1846, ii. 673, col. 1, Miscellaneous Poems, or *Works and Life*, 1876, viii. 152-3.

" . . . Since Chaucer was alive and hale,
No man hath walkt along our roads with step
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue
So varied in discourse"

1846. Browning's *Poems*. 'Papers on Literature and Art.' By S. Margaret Fuller. Part II. London: Wiley and Putnam, 1846, pp. 31-45.—S. Of some interest.
1848. Browning's *Plays and Poems*. By James Russell Lowell. 'North American Review' (Boston), April 1848, vol. lxvi. pp. 357-400.—S. A good article.
1848. *Poems*, rev. by C. R. Smith, in 'The Christian Examiner' (Boston, U.S.A.), p. 361.
1849. 'Eclectic Review,' London, 4th Series, xxvi. 203-214, on 1. the *Poems*, 2 vols. 1849, and 2. *Sordello*. 1840. A sympathetic and excellent review. "The higher the poetry, the fuller, deeper, its spirit, the more consummate and individual its expression, the fewer those competent to receive and welcome it, and the greater the obstacles to its reception, even among these (p. 204) . . . in the right apprehension and faithful account of contemporaneous greatness, consists the highest work of criticism properly so called (*ib.*) . . . Without study, actual *bond-fide* study, his [R.B.'s] poetry must remain *caviare* to the most intelligent reader . . . Yet, to our mind, this is a great and original poet . . . His poetic genius is essentially recondite; and its expression could be nothing less . . . his assuredly must rank as a new manifestation of poetic art. With no modern poet are we conversant, in whom less of resemblance to others can be traced. None stands more absolutely self-entire and independent. It is plain, that to be *genuine and true, was, rightly, his great aim*. That the realization should square with every chance reader's apprehension, rested not with him. Popular or not, he must be a poet after his own fashion, if at all (p. 206) . . . Those very poems, such as *Sordello*, *Pippa Passes*, in respect to which, the loudest complaints of obscurity have been raised, are precisely those, in which the fullest wealth of poetry, the highest creative power, have been realized (p. 207) . . . Robert Browning is not one whom we can recommend to the readers of poetry at their ease: gentlemen who would have their hour's amusement out of their poet . . . we should doubt whether any could be competent to speak of Browning, till having given him a *second* reading; or fully to estimate him till after, at least, three readings (p. 208) . . . We ourselves must confess to having gone through our first reading of *Sordello* with feelings, for the most part, of unmingled perplexity, occasionally passing into angry despair. Not till we had entered on the second reading, did we begin to apprehend its scope or unity, or see the exceeding beauty of its parts. But now, in its subtle, yet broadly-marked development of character—whether drawn at full, as of the dreamy, irresolute aspirer, *Sordello* himself, or of the showy, prompt, decisive man of action, the warrior *Salinguerra*—or sketched

¹ "The mottoes [to the accounts of the living authors described in this Book], which are singularly happy and appropriate, were for the most part supplied by Miss Barrett and Robert Browning, then unknown to each other."—*Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning* . . to R. H. Horne, ed. S. R. T.—Mayer, 1877, i. 136.

in brief, at few and slight touches, as of the glorious creature Palma—afar-off shining in the poet's golden shadowing of her beauty, spiritual and material—and of the fervent poet, Eglamour, type of his class; in its consummate wealth of general purely poetic thought, and imaginative beauty, overflowing the whole, the poem stands before us as the most splendid representative conceivable, of all that can be attained by the union, with the purely poetic embodiment of highest thoughtful aspiration—of the fullest luxury of glowing and passionately imaginative vitality (p. 210) . . . Commencing with *Sordello*, and thence passing to . . . *Paracelsus* . . . from these, to the indeterminate drama, so original and deep-reaching, of *Pippa Passes* and *A Soul's Tragedy*; and from these, to the rich suggestive gallery of minor dramatic sketches . . . as the *Madhouse Cells*, *Pictor Ignotus*, *St. Praxed's Church*, *The Confessional*, *The last Duchess*; . . . how shall we convey to those unfamiliar with it, any sense of the wealth herein comprised: the large, many-fronted embodiment of human thought, and feeling, and aspiration, the new world of beauty, directly, or suggestively, in it opened up—the significance of life, actual, or dreamed, laid bare before us? (p. 211) . . . In Browning's *unformal* drama we find the highest success of poetic and creative power achieved; in nearly all his lyrics, so living and deeply suggestive; and in the *Pippa Passes*. In the latter, where the young girl Pippa, on her year's holiday from silk-weaving, during the course of her pleasure-ramble unconsciously influences, through her innocent songs, the various groups of human life she passes;—the adulterous blood-stained lovers, the dreaming artist, the scheming Italian patriot, the crafty churchman; in this full, shifting drama, we have a deeper, truer dramatic exposition, a larger range, and more completely developed . . . than is to be met with throughout the entire series of the poet's professed plays" (p. 212). By Cyrus Edmunds.

1849. 'The Eclectic Magazine of Foreign Literature, Science, and Art,' December, 1849, vol. xviii, no. 4, p. 453-469. Reprint of *The English Review's* article on "Robert Browning's Poems",—a review of the *Poems*, 2 vols. 1849. "Mr. Browning is not a poet who can be done justice to in a few words. He must be illustrated and elucidated with care. No author more requires interpreters to stand between him and the public: and where, in the present dearth of taste or common sense in the critical world, . . . are we to look for such interpreters? Mr. Browning must bide his time, secure of his own greatness, and of the world's awaking sooner or later to a just appreciation of it." . . . p. 469, col. 1.

1849. 'The Living Authors of England.' By Thomas Powell. New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1849. The chapter on 'Robert Browning' occupies pp. 71-85 of the volume. In the course of Mr. Powell's notice, the poem of *Pauline* is mentioned. The writer, who was personally acquainted with Mr. Browning (to whom he dedicated one of his dramatic pieces), speaks also of some "translations from Horace," done "in his eighth year," and "remarkable for that peculiarity of mirth which he has since carried out to a fatal mannerism." Some curious biographical and personal particulars are given.—S. See p. 92.

- 1850, June 1. Littell's 'Living Age,' Boston, U.S.A., No. 315, xxv. 403-9, on *Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day*. "the book before us can hardly be received but as an expression of the writer's spiritual experiences in their utmost force and intensity . . . "Lord, I believe! Help thou my unbelief!" exclaims the inspired writer; and the purpose of the poem is to express belief in Christianity, not without doubts, but against doubts. Between him who discards faith altogether and him who yields it up into others' keeping, between the infallible and the infidel, Mr. Browning takes his stand; to declare with all humility his acceptance of the truth, that only from uncertainty can genuine faith be born, that only from modesty and self-distrust can spring true resolution and self-reliance, and that the materials for a temple to God's service are to be wrought out in human life, amid all its pains and its weaknesses, its "darkness, hunger, toil, distress" (p. 403) . . . Mr. Browning . . . will yet win and wear his laurel, and be admitted for what he truly is, one of the most original poets of his time. He is equally a master of thought and emotion, and joins to a rare power of imaginative creation, that which is still more rarely found in union with it—the *subtlest power of mental reasoning and analysis*. Over the instrument

of language he exerts the most facile mastery, and few poets have moved with such free and flowing step through the most complicated word-mazes of music and measure" (p. 409).

1851. A second edition of Mr. Powell's volume of 1849 appeared in London two years later (under the title of 'Pictures of the Living Authors of Britain.' By Thomas Powell, author of 'Pictures of the Living Authors of America.' London: Partridge and Oakley, 1851), in which the notice of Browning occupies pp. 61-75. —S. (It contains the anecdote of Douglas Jerrold and *Sordello*.—T. W. C.)
1851. 'Revue des deux Mondes.' 6^{me} Série. Tome xi. 15 Août 1851, p. 661-689. Article by J. Milsand (of Dijon, to whom the revized 1863 edition of *Sordello* is dedicated, and whose review 'may still be read with advantage.'—E. Dowden, 1867), on 'La Poésie Anglaise depuis Byron.' [I. Alfred Tennyson.] II. Robert Browning. 1. *Poems*, 2 vols. [1849]; 2. *Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day*, 1850. "M. Browning . . . est de la famille des Milton plutôt que des Shakspeare . . . M. Browning est un Hercule . . . je ne m'étonnerais pas que M. Browning fût réservé à finir par la poésie épique. . . *Son génie à lui, c'est de . . . revoir dans chaque fait un abrégé de la création . . .* De tous les poètes que je sache il est le plus capable de résumer les conceptions de la religion, de la morale et de la science théorique de notre époque, en leur donnant un corps poétique, je veux dire des formes qui soient le beau approprié à ces abstractions. . . ." M. Milsand wrote another review of Browning, but where, I do not know.
1853. 'An Essay on the characteristic errors of our most distinguished living poets.' By Nicholas J. Gannon. Dublin: W. B. Kelly, 8 Grafton St., 1853 [a pamphlet, pp. 1-49]; pp. 25-32 deal with the incomprehensibility, &c. of R. B.—C.
1853. 'Six Months in Italy.' By George Stillman Hillard, 2 vols. [of Boston, America]. London: Murray, 1853, vol. i. pp. 139-40. 'Robert and Elizabeth Browning,' a personal description.—C. See 'Personal Notices' below, p. 108.
1853. 'Thalatta: a Book for the Sea-side.' Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1853. Motto. "God's own profound
Was above me, &c."
p. 99, "Night and Morning." p. 197-9, "The Sad Rhyme."
"Over the sea our galleys went
With cleaving prows, &c."—C.
1855. Browning's *Men and Women*, 1856. 'The Rambler,' 1856, vol. v. pp. 54-71. This review is said to have been written by Cardinal Wiseman, the original of *Bishop Blougram*. See above, p. 54, note 2.
1856. George Brimley. 'Fraser's Mag.,' 1856, Jan., on *Men and Women*. This article is much in that well-known Trinity 'Superior-Being' style, which so tickles—or irritates—the rest of the University, and which is as much regretted by the sensible members of the College as by its admirers outside. The review was not worthy of George Brimley, or at any rate was written in one of his ungenerous moods. And so his judicious friends thought. They left it out of their reprint of his 'Essays and Reviews.' (The "T. C. C." after his "G. B." at the end of the article, was not a joint reviewer, as I was once assured, but "Trinity College, Cambridge".)
1859. In John Forster's 'Life of Landor.' 2 vols. 1869. See II. 347. 17 Oct. 1838. II. 424. Between 1840-45. II. 425. "Somewhat later (1845)" (*sic*). [Allusion to *Luria and Soul's Tragedy*.] II. 562, &c. Landor was assisted by R. B. with both care and cash, *e.g.* "I am now (6 Aug. 1859) in a cottage near Siena, which I owe to Browning, the kind friend who found it for me, whom I had seen only three or four times in my life, yet who made me the voluntary offer of what money I wanted, and who insists on managing my

¹ The full name should be written when the College is mentioned; for, this spring, I was accused of blasphemy by several people for heading a Circular to some misguided acquaintances in the College and elsewhere, "To the Trinity and other withdrawers. . ." And one very popular member of a large dramatic club in London wrote to me complainingly, that no man there knew what "the Trinity" meant.

affairs here, and paying for my lodgings and sustenance. Never was such generosity and such solicitude as this incomparable man has shown in my behalf."—Landor to Forster, II. 562.—C. See below, under 1869.

1860. 'Reliques of Father Prout.' New Ed. London: Bohn, 1860. Preface, p. 4. From Florence the poet Browning has sent for this edition some lines lately found in the Euganean hills, traced on a marble slab that covered the bones of Pietro di Abano, held in his old age to be an astrologer:

"Studiando le mie cifre col compasso,
Rilevo che sarò presto sotterra,
Perchè del mio saper si fa gran chiasso,
E gl'ignoranti m'hanno mosso guerra"—

of which epitaph the poet has supplied this vernacular, rendering *verbatim*:

"Studying my cyphers with the compass,
I find I shall soon be under the daisy;
Because of my lore, folks make such a rumpus,
That every dull dog is thereat *unaisy*." [See Notes, p. 114.]

1880. *Dramatic Lyrics*. Second Series, p. 67, 68, notes.

1861. Browning and Landor. 'Essays on English Literature.' By Thomas McNicoll. London: Basil Montagu Pickering, 1861, pp. 298-309.—S.
1863. 'Fraser.' Feb. 1863, pp. 240-256. Signed 'Shirley.' On Robert Browning.—C.
1863. 'National Review,' No. 34, Oct. 1863, vol. xlvii. pp. 417-446. *The Poetical Works of Robert Browning*. Three volumes. Third edition. Chapman and Hall. By R. H. Hutton: afterwards republished in his 'Literary Essays,' 1871.—C.
1864. 'Robert Browning.' By Moncure D. Conway. 'The Victoria Magazine' (London, Emily Faithfull), February 1864, vol. ii. No. x. pp. 228-316. The poem of *Pauline* is mentioned in the earlier part of this article, four years before its republication.—S.
1864. 'Edinburgh Review,' Oct., pp. 537-565, on *Poems*, 1863; and *Dramatis Personæ*, 1864.
1864. Robert Browning's Poetry and 'The Edinburgh Review.' Letter to the Editor of 'The Reader,' signed "Gerald Massey."—"Reader," November 26, 1864 (vol. iv. fol. 674-675). A scathing exposure of the incompetence and of the slipshod style of the reviewer¹ of Robert Browning's *Poems* in the 'Edinburgh' of October, 1864.—S.
1864. 'Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning; or Pure, Ornate, and Grotesque Art in English Poetry.' 'National Review,' New Series, No. 1, November, 1864 (Chapman and Hall). Reprinted in 'Literary Studies' by the late Walter Bagehot. London: Longmans, 1879, vol. ii. pp. 338-390.—S. The Browning part begins on p. 375. What Mr. Bagehot says is not very deep, or complete, tho it is keen. "Grotesque art deals not with normal types, but with abnormal specimens . . . (it) works by contrast. . . Mr. Browning is an artist working by incongruity. . . . He puts together things which no one else would have produced or tried to produce. . . . No one ever read him without seeing, not only his great ability, but his great *mind* . . . he is great, not in mere accomplishments, but in himself. He has applied a hard strong intellect to real life . . . to the problems of his age. He has striven to know what *is*. His heart is in what he says. . . . He is at once a student of mysticism, and a citizen of the world. He puts down what is good for the naughty, and what is naughty for the good (p. 56). He is the most of a realist, and the least of an idealist, of any poet we know." p. 62.
1861. 'Photographic Portraits of Men of Eminence, with Biographical Memoirs.' London: Bennet, 186-, pp. 109-112. Robert Browning, with Photo by E. Edwards.—C.

¹ The poor man found it 'a subject of amazement that poems of so obscure and uninviting a character should find numerous readers; thought his [B's] works were deficient in the qualities we should desire to find [in] them, and didn't believe they would *survive*, except as a curiosity and a puzzle.'

1865. 'A Campaigner at Home.' By Shirley Jn. Skelton, Advocate, Edinburgh. London: Longmans, &c., 1865, pp. 274-283. 'Robert Browning,' a reprint of the article in 'Fraser's Magazine,' Feb. 1863.—C. Sympathetic and worth reading.
1865. Browning's *Poems*. 'Quarterly Review,' July, 1865 (vol. cxviii. pp. 77-105), on *Dramatis Personæ* 1864, and *Poems* 3 vols., 1863.—S.
1867. 'Robert Browning.' Two Papers (unsigned) in 'The Contemporary Review' of January and February, 1867. (London: Alex. Strahan, vol. iv. pp. 1-15, 133-148).—S. Thoughtful and able articles well worth reading. See p. 26 n., above.
1867. 'Fraser's Magazine,' Oct. pp. 518-530. "Mr. Browning's *Sordello*. First Paper": signed "Edward Dowden."¹ Two Papers were accepted by Charles Kingsley when editing the Magazine for Mr. Froude during his absence. On his return, Mr. Froude, wrongly and unhappily for Browning students, declined the second Paper, and it has never been printed.
1868. 'Athenæum,' Dec. 26, pp. 875-6, on *The Ring and the Book*, vol. i. "Everything Brownish is found here—the legal jauntiness, the knitted argumentation, the cunning prying into detail, the suppressed tenderness, the humanity,—the salt intellectual humour, . . . not open and social, like that of Dickens, but with a similar tendency. . . . Whatever else may be said of Mr. Browning and his work, by way of minor criticism, it will be admitted on all hands that *nowhere in any literature can be found a man and a work more fascinating in their way*. As for the man, he was crowned long ago; and we are not of those who grumble because one king has a better seat than another, an easier cushion, a finer light—in the great Temple. A king is a king, and each will choose his place. . . ." The article was by Robert Buchanan, and a revised version of it was published in his 'Master-Spirits,' 1873: see below, p. 100.
1868. 'Essays on Robert Browning's Poetry,' by John T. Nettlehip. London: Macmillan and Co. 1868, pp. i-viii. 1-305. Contents. Preface v. vi. Contents: Introduction, p. 1; *Poems on Love*, 13; *The Flight of the Duchess*, 62; *Waring*, 79; 'Before' and 'After,' 109; *Childe Roland*, 120; *Sordello* (with a sketch of the story), 155; *Saul*, 235; the Digression in *Sordello*, 279; Epilogue, 299-305. A worthwhile book, nearly out of print.
1868. 'David Gray, and other Essays, chiefly on Poetry,' By Robert Buchanan. London: S. Low & Co., 1868 (pp. 32-6) on 'emotional ratiocination.' Contrasting a passage from the *Epistle of Karshish*—"He holds on firmly to some thread of life" to "Divorced even now by premature full growth"—and another from *A Death in the Desert* in which John the Evangelist is supposed . . . to review the arguments in the 'Leben Jesu' against miracles—"I say that man was made to grow, not stop," to "Thou hast it; use it, and forthwith, or die!"—Mr. B. says 'Both these passages are ratiocinative; yet one is a poem, the other not even art. There is a flash of ecstasy through the strangely cautious description of Karsheesh; every syllable is weighed and thoughtful, yet everywhere the lines swell into perfect feeling. What shall be said, however, to St. John on Strauss? The violence of the imaginative effort to reach St. John's

¹ "One word on the obscurity of *Sordello*. It arises not so much from peculiarities of style, and the involved structure of occasional sentences (. . . as a rule, the style of *Sordello* is vigorously straightforward), as from the *unrelaxing demand which is made throughout upon the intellectual and imaginative energy and alertness of the reader*. The truth is, Mr. Browning has given too much in *his* couple of hundred pages; there is not a line of the poem which is not as full of matter as a line can be; so that if the ten syllables sometimes seem to start and give way under the strain, we need not wonder. We come to no places in *Sordello* where we can rest and dream or look up at the sky. Ideas, emotions, images, analyses, descriptions, still come crowding on. There is too much of everything; we cannot see the wood for the trees. Towards the end of the third book Mr. Browning interrupts the story that he may 'pause and breathe.' That is an apt expression; but Mr. Browning seems unable to slacken the motion of the mind, and during this breathing-space heart and brain, perceptive and reflective power . . . are almost more *busily at work than ever*." pp. 518-19.

views on miracles precludes all emotion¹; and because there is no emotion, false notes occur in every page of the poem. The mind has forced itself into a certain attitude, instead of suffering itself to be coerced by powerful feeling' (p. 56, note): 'It might be curious to note in detail how far Browning's orthodoxy is in advance even of our most liberal orthodoxy.'

1869. 'Athenæum,' March 20, pp. 399-400, on *The Ring and the Book*, vols. ii. iii and iv. "At last, the *opus magnum* of our generation lies before the world. . . . The fascination of the work is still so strong upon us, our eyes are still so spell-bound by the immortal features of Pompilia (which shine through the troubled mists of the story with almost insufferable beauty), that we feel it difficult to write calmly and without exaggeration; yet we must record at once our conviction, not merely that *The Ring and the Book* is beyond all parallel the supremest poetical achievement of our time, but that it is the most precious and profound spiritual treasure that England has produced since the days of Shakspeare.² Its intellectual greatness is as nothing compared with its transcendent spiritual teaching. . . ."
1869. 'Walter Savage Landor, a Biography,' by John Forster. 2 vols. London: Chapman & Hall, Piccadilly, 1869. Vol. II. p. 374, calls R. B. "our Paracelsus." p. 424 wishes R. B. would "atticise a little." pp. 562-574. Life in Italy with R. B.'s assistance.—C.
1869. 'Browning in 1869,' 'Cornhill Magazine,' No. 110, February, 1869, vol. xix. pp. 249-256.—S. A mildish affair: p. 254 is the best part of it.
1869. On *The Ring and the Book*. By John Morley. 'Fortnightly Review,' March, 1869, vol. v. new series, pp. 331-343.—S. An able and generous article.
1869. 'Quarterly,' April, 1869, on 'Modern English Poets,' pp. 328-359. A few sensible pages are on Br.'s poems and *The Ring and the Book*.
1869. 'Echoes,' April 10, on *The Ring and the Book*.—C.
1869. Alfred Austin, in 'Temple Bar,' June, vol. xxvi. pp. 316-333.—S. Reprinted in 1870. This article is strongly against Browning. Mr. Austin has since repented of it. See the entry '1870. The Poetry of the Period.'
1869. *The Ring and the Book*. 'Edinburgh Review,' July 1869 (vol. cxxx. pp. 164-186).—S.
1869. 'London Quarterly Review,' July 1869, on Browning's Poetry—all then publisht.³
1869. 'Robert Browning and the Epic of Psychology.' Reprinted from the 'London Quarterly Review,' July, 1869. Printed for private circulation; pp. 1-37. "The list printed above [at head of article] is, we believe, a complete bibliographical catalogue of Browning's works" (p. 6).—C.
1869. 'North British Review,' Oct. 1869, pp. 97-128. Mr. Browning's Latest Poetry. [*Ring and Book*.]—C.

¹ Would a dying man reasoning calmly on miracles show emotion?

² 1871. Prof. Sidney Colvin has a few lines in the 'Fortnightly Rev.', Oct. 1871, p. 470, on these "amazing volumes" and "the pregnant genius" in them, "into which are packed thought enough, experience enough, tragedy enough, comedy enough, poetry enough . . . to overstock not a book but a library . . . inexhaustible vivacity of humour, burning tenderness, knowledge of life and literature pressed down and running over, a masterly range of style—but much above all, a trenchant human insight guided by such manly nobility of instinct as helps him [R. B.] to strike straight at the substance of truth, as well as to grasp each of its differing shadows in turn."

³ Discusses the two main present schools of English poetry, the Idyllic (led by Tennyson) and the Psychological, led by Browning, noting the Renaissance of the Rossettis and the Chaucer of Wm. Morris—and then deals with Browning, who has taken "for a nobler stage the soul itself," from *Pauline* to the *Ring and the Book*, on which latter the review is really written. It claims W. W. Story's 'Graffiti d'Italia' as a solid result of working in Browning's method without imitation of style. Also, 'A Roman Lawyer at Jerusalem—First Century,' in 'Blackwood's Mag.' for Oct. 1868.

1869. 'Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Browning.' By Edward Dowden, M.A. [in 1868]. 'Afternoon Lectures on Literature and Art' (Dublin), Fifth Series, 1869, pp. 139-179.—S. Reprinted and revized in Prof. Dowden's 'Studies in Literature,' 1789-1877, C. K. Paul and Co. 1878. By all means to be read and studied.
1870. 'St. Paul's Magazine,' Dec. }
 1871. " " " " } on Browning's *Poems*.
1870. 'The Poetry of the Period.' By Alfred Austin. London: Richard Bentley, 1870. The paper on Mr. Browning occupies pp. 38 to 76. It originally appeared in 'Temple Bar,' for June, 1869 (vol. xxvi. pp. 316-333). In a recent paper in 'Macmillan's Magazine' the author states that this volume has long been out of print, and that he will never consent to its reappearance.—S.
1870. 'Modern Men of Letters honestly criticised.' By J. Hain Friswell. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1870. This book was suppressed on account of an action for libel instituted by Mr. Sala against the publishers, in which heavy damages were awarded. The chapter devoted to Robert Browning occupies pp. 117-131.—S.
1870. 'A Household Book of English Poetry,' selected and arranged with notes, by Richard Chenevix Trench, D.D., Archbishop of Dublin, Second edition, revised. London: Macmillan and Co., 1870. p. 333-340, *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*; p. 366, *Home Thoughts from Abroad*; p. 368, *Home Thoughts from the Sea*.—C.
1870. 'The Gentle Philosopher, or Home Thoughts for Home Thinkers.' London: James Blackwood and Co., Paternoster Row; no date. [J.G. Friswell.] "Respectfully inscribed to that great poet and true man, Robert Browning."—C.
1870. Louis Étienne, in the 'Revue des Deux Mondes,' Sec. Periode, tome 85, p. 704-735, on the *Poet. Works*, 1868, and the *Ring and the Book*, 1868-9. "M. Browning . . . procédait, à n'en pas douter, de Shelley (p. 706). . . Son premier poème porte la marque visible de l'école de Shelley. Paracelse est une âme inquiète, ardente à la recherche du savoir . . . son héros meurt triste à la fois et résigné, comme l'Alastor de Shelley (p. 707). . . II. Imaginez un poète qui se sent né pour le drame et qui pourtant n'a pas en lui le démon de l'action, c'est-à-dire, la logique des combinaisons multiples naissant de la passion humaine et l'entraînant vers un dénoûment final; voilà l'écrivain dont nous essayons de tracer la physionomie (p. 715). . . il simplifie souvent le drame . . . et il le place dans une seule âme . . . S'il n'a pas l'invention d'un Shakspeare ou d'un Molière pour . . . le mouvement des situations, des incidents, des péripéties, il a du moins leur faculté précieuse de n'être plus soi et d'entrer dans l'âme d'un autre" (p. 717). . . [He then contrasts well the noble elevation of *Saul* with the humour and vigour of *Fra Lippo* (but says in a note that Fra Lippo was not the master, but the pupil of Masaccio, and survived him 36 [that is, 26] years), and then reviews the *Ring and the Book*, concluding that its method is not a fit one for poetry. The creation of Men and Women is Browning's forte:] "Il était appelé à faire revivre les hommes du passé, non pour les mettre en mouvement, non pour les précipiter dans l'action, mais uniquement pour le plaisir de les voir respirer, reprendre la vie, le sentiment et la parole. . . M. Browning a créé Saül, Pompilia, une foule d'autres personnages vrais et vivans; que faut-il davantage à son ambition?"—p. 735. Thompson Cooper's *Bibl. Dict.* gives the dates, Masaccio died 1443, Fra Filippo Lippi 'was poisoned (1469) by the relations of a female whom he had seduced, and by whom he had a son, *Filippino Lippi* (b. 1460; died 1505), who was also a celebrated painter.' Hole gives the same dates.
1871. Browning's *Poems*. *The Ring and the Book*. By E. J. H[asell]. 'The Saint Paul's Magazine,' December 1870, and January 1871. London: Strahan and Co., vol. vii. pp. 257-276, 377-397.—S.
1871. Robert Browning's new Poem [*Hervé Riel*]. Letter to the editor of 'The Echo,' signed "The Author of 'Tennysonianiana.'" [R. H. Shepherd.] Printed in 'The Echo,' Wednesday, February 15, 1871.—S. [Mr. S. says that the text of the poem used by him in his anticipatory notice of *Hervé Riel* was the MS. one of which he has let me note the variations above, page 65, note.—F.]
1871. 'Daily News,' Tuesday, Feb. 28. A Leader,—an admirable one—on *Hervé Riel*.—C. See p. 65, note 1.

1871. 'The Illustrated Magazine,' March 15, 1871, pp. 359-364. Robert Brown-
ing, M.A. [With wood-cut portrait, after a Photo: by Charles Watkins.]-C.
1871. 'Athenæum,' June 10, reviews R. H. Hutton's 'Essays, Theological and
Literary,' 2 vols, Strahan and Co., 1871 (-C), and differs from some of his
opinions on Browning, "whose poetry, more than that of any other poet,
requires a critical introduction and even an explanatory commentary"—which,
let us hope, the Browning Society will provide.
1871. 'Primitiæ,' one vol. small 8vo, pp. i-viii. 1-148: printed for private cir-
culation. Dublin: Hodges, Foster and Co., 1871. 'Essays by the Students of
Alexandra College, Dublin,' pp. 1-37. "Browning as a Preacher." By Miss
E. Dickinson West. At end, "The rest of this essay is omitted, being too
long." Afterwards reprinted in full in 'The Dark Blue Magazine,' Oct. and
Nov. 1871.-C. Miss West is the daughter of the Dean of St. Patrick's.
1871. 'Robert Browning's First Poem.' By Richard Herne Shepherd. 'The St.
James's Magazine,' August, 1871, vol. vii. new series, pp. 485-496. An account
of *Pauline*, with copious extracts, which were submitted to Mr. Browning, and
printed by his express permission. This paper was written, though not pub-
lished, in 1867, before the reinstatement of *Pauline* in the new edition of the
author's collected works, and was intended to form one of the chapters of a
volume entitled 'Unknown Writings of Well-known Authors,' which never
saw the light, and the greater part of which has now been superseded or fore-
stalled.—S.
1871. 'Athenæum,' Aug. 12, p. 199-200, rev. *Balaustion's Adventure*.
1871. 'Contemporary Review,' Sept. 1871, pp. 284-296. Mr. Browning's new
poem [*Balaustion*], by Matthew Browne [an assumed name].-C.
1871. G. A. Simcox. 'Academy,' Sept. 1, on *Balaustion*.
1871. Sidney Colvin. 'Fortnightly Review,' Oct. 1, on *Balaustion*.
1871. 'The Times,' Oct. 6. A very long review of *Balaustion's Adventure*. The
poem "is a garden of delights to those whose taste has been educated to
appreciate its theme."-C.
1871. 'Standard Penny Readings, &c.,' edited and prefaced by Tom Hood. New
edition, 3 Parts. Moxon, Son and Co., 1871. I. pp. 1-6, *How they brought
the Good News, &c.* II. pp. 83-88, *Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis*. III. *An
Incident of the French Camp*.-C.
1871. Mr. Browning.—'Essays, Theological and Literary,' by Richard Holt Hutton.
London: Strahan and Co., 1871, vol. ii. pp. 190-247. [A reprint of the
article of 1869.]-S. A somewhat hard and grudging review, not realising
what a help and power Browning is to the Broad Church School, and all Believers.
1871. 'Our Living Poets: An Essay in Criticism.' By H. Buxton Forman.
London: Tinsley Brothers, 1871. (The Fourth Chapter, on Robert Browning,
extends from pp. 103-152.)-S. Not worth much.
1871. Robert Browning's latest Poem, *Balaustion's Adventure*, including a *Tran-
script from Euripides*. 'The St. James's Magazine,' October, 1871, vol. viii.
new series, pp. 83-91.-S.
1871. 'The Examiner,' Dec. 23, 1871, pp. 1267-8, rev. Mr. Browning's *Saviour
of Society*.-C.
1871. 'Athenæum,' Dec. 23, p. 827-8, rev. *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau*.
1871. *Balaustion's Adventure*. Review by Sidney Colvin, in the 'Fortnightly
Review,' October 1871, vol. x. new series, pp. 478-490.-S.
- "Mr. Browning . . . takes hold of the play [Euripides's *Alkestis*, or a husband
lying at the point of death, and his wife informed that her one chance of saving
him is by dying in his place]; translates it; and since so many observations
suggest themselves to his vivacious genius as he goes along . . . and since one
thing may have so many sides . . . he invents a mouthpiece for his translation
and commentary in the shape of a girl who is made to recite the play in her
own character, together with the circumstances of a previous recital she has
given of it,—such circumstances constituting the romance or adventure upon
which her interest as a figure depends (p. 479). . . From the point of view of

scholarship, Mr. Browning's translation must, in the main, be confessed a model of facile felicity" (p. 489).

1871. 'Browning as a Preacher.' By Miss E. Dickinson West. Two Papers. 'The Dark Blue,' October and November, 1871, vol. ii. pp. 171-84, 305-19.—S.

"Browning's poetry has one characteristic, which gives its teaching peculiar influence over contemporary minds. I mean the way in which, all the while being perfectly free from egotism, it brings its readers in some inexplicable way into a contact with the real self of the author, closer and more direct than that which we have with any other poets through their writings. Once you succeed in construing the complicated thinking and feeling of this or that passage of his, you feel, not that you are seeing something that a man has made, but that you are in the immediate presence of the man himself. I know of no other writings (except J. H. Newman's) having this peculiarity to such a degree . . . and the knowledge that there is the real living mind of another man speaking to your mind, gives a restful sense of reality, that is the starting-point of all belief and of all motive to action. Surely any one who has received this from Browning, must feel as if there would be a miserable ingratitude in the sort of criticism which should carp at his poetry for its lack of polish in style, or prettiness in ideas. Browning is greater than his art, and the best work which his poetry does, is to bring you into his own presence (p. 174-5). . . . Browning brings from out of his own individuality something which he did not receive from his age, and which he offers to it as a gift . . . some of the intense earnestness of Puritanism, and the strenuousness of effort which gave heroic grandeur to the old asceticism. . . . The idea of a struggle and a wrestling in which the *wills* of men are to be engaged—the central idea of early and mediæval Christian thought—is recognised fully and distinctly by Browning in all that he has written. He holds that men's business in this world is labour and strife and conquest, and not merely free unconscious growth and harmonious development . . . his *chief* point of difference from the majority of modern poets, is his being emphatically the poet of the will (p. 176-7) . . . it is *chiefly* in the human impulses which in the world of sense are never satisfied, that he considers the subjective evidence of the spirit world to lie (p. 177-8) . . . having taken all the higher human impulses and aspirations to be evidences whereby we discern an order of things extending beyond the world of which sense is cognizant, he becomes able to conceive of the life that now is, as a condition, not of men waiting and watching—not as a struggle only on the *defensive* against evil, in which safety is the only kind of success sought for—but as a state in which growth and progress are to be things of the present—in which the struggle is to be for acquisition and not alone for defence (p. 178). . . . All human feelings and aspirations become precious in Browning's eyes, not for what they are, but for what they point to. He becomes capable of seeing a grandeur (potential though not actual) in human aims whose aspect would be, to careless, unsympathizing eyes, ridiculous rather than sublime (p. 179). He, more than any other poet, has ever present with him these two ideas: that the world—the material and the human—contains what is 'very good'; and also that 'the fashion of this world passeth away.' His noble christianised Platonism takes 'all partial beauty as a pledge of beauty in its plenitude'. . . . The earth is to him God's ante-chamber. . . . He does not image to himself the life after death as a *home*, in the sense of a state that shall be rested in, and never exchanged for a higher. He conceives of it as differing from the life that now is, not in permanency, but in elevation and in increase of capacities. And the earth has its own especial glory, which he will not overlook, of being first of an infinite series of ascending stages, showing even now, in the beauty and love that is abroad in it, the tokens of the visitings of God's free spirit (p. 180) . . . it may . . . be that the feeling gained by Browning's onward gaze of expectation is higher, even if considered purely as an *artist's* feeling, than that of the wistful pathos that comes to other poets through their sense of a seeking baffled alike behind and before. And it may be that our inability to recognise it as higher, is because of our having, although contemporaries with Browning, lagged

¹ Among the very best Articles written on 'Browning.'—E. Dowden.

behind him in thought and aspiration; and not having as yet attained to the conception towards which his poetry reaches in its beautiful imperfect grandeur, of a Christianity and Art—nowhere destructive of each other—two parts of one great Revelation p. 316. What Browning seeks is truth absolute, not relative; and if he thinks he has got hold of the minutest particle of *that*, it is to him as a thing indestructible by any mass of contradictions; and it suffices to him as a sure earnest of the rest. His own heart's instinctive conviction of a law of love is out of the reach of whatever 'evil dreams' Nature may lend, and does not need to concern itself with analogies of her waste and destruction (p. 317) . . . one of the aspects of Mr. Browning's preaching [is] its stern moral lessons, and its peculiar downrightness of enforcing them. As poet of the Will, he has words of unsparing condemnation to bestow on such sins as failure 'through weak endeavour'. There is an earnest severity in *The Statue and the Bust*, and in his *Sordello*—terriblest of tragedies, inasmuch as it depicts the deterioration of a soul. . . . I gladly cease from the attempt to write little definitions of the poetry which I would rather *feel* indefinitely, and grow into increasingly."—E. Dickinson West. [An admirable essay.]

1872. Catalogue of the Exhibition of the Royal Academy of Arts, p. 27.

"543. *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. . . . Miss A. M. Lea."

'From street to street he piped advancing,
And step by step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser,
Into which all plunged and perished.'—*R. Browning*.

Miss Anna Lea (now Mrs. Merritt) is an American artist settled in England. This picture of hers, 3 ft. 4 in. by 2 ft. 6, has been altered since it was exhibited; all the background repainted, changed and improved. It now belongs to Mr. C. Kegan Paul. The earliest English version of the story is Verstegan's, 1605.

1872. Mr. Browning's *Balaustion*. 'Edinburgh Review,' January, 1872 (vol. cxxxv. pp. 221-249).—S.

1872. 'Illustrated News,' Jan. 13, on *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau*.

1872. G. A. Simcox. 'Academy,' Jan. 15, on *Hohenstiel-Schwangau*.

1872. 'Once a Week,' Feb. 17, 1872, pp. 164-167. Robert Browning. [With humorous full-length of R. B. in character of the *Pied Piper*.]—C.

1872. Mr. Browning's New Poem [by Richard Herne Shepherd].—'Echo,' Thursday, June 6, 1872. A notice of *Fine at the Fair*, then newly published.—S.

1872. F. Wedmore, in 'Academy,' July 1, on *Fine at the Fair*.

1872. 'The Guardian,' Sept. 25, p. 1215-16, reviews *Fine at the Fair* unfavourably, contrasting it with *Pippa Passes*, which the reviewer likes.

1872. 'Septimius.' A Romance, by Nathaniel Hawthorne, 2nd ed. London: Henry S. King & Co., 65, Cornhill. 1872. [Preface signed Una Hawthorne:—last paragraph,] "My earnest thanks are due to Mr. Robert Browning for his kind assistance, and advice in interpreting the manuscript, otherwise so difficult to me."—C.

1872. 'The Fleshly School of Poetry and other Phenomena of the Day.' By Robert Buchanan. Strahan & Co. . . . 1872. "To my thinking, there is no grander passage in literature than that tremendous scene between Otilia and her paramour, in *Pippa Passes*: no one accuses the author of that, and of the *Ring and the Book*, of neglecting love or overlooking the body; and yet I do daily homage to the genius of Robert Browning." See too p. 1 & 43.

1873. George Macdonald, LL.D., on Browning's *Christmas-Eve*, in 'The Day of Rest, an Illustrated Journal for Sunday Reading,' Jan. 18 and 25, 1873. "The verse is full of life and vigour, flagging never. Where, in several parts, the exact meaning is difficult to reach, this results chiefly from the dramatic rapidity and condensation of the thoughts. The argumentative power is indeed wonderful; the arguments themselves powerful in their simplicity, and embodied in words of admirable force. The poem is full of pathos and humour, full of beauty and grandeur, earnestness and truth."—C.

1873. 'Temple Bar,' Feb. 1873, pp. 315-328. *Fine at the Fair*, and Robert Browning.—C. A fairly helpful review.
1873. 'Contemporary Review,' June, 1873, pp. 83-106. Signed, 'A. Orr.' A review of *Red Cotton Night-cap Country*.—C.
1873. 'St. Paul's Magazine,' June, 1873, pp. 680-699. July, 1873, pp. 49-66. Signed, 'E. J. Hasell.' On 'Euripides in Modern English—Browning's *Balaustion*.'—C.
1873. 'Daily News,' May 5, p. 5, reviews *Red Cotton Night-cap Country*: thinks its theme and motive outside the sphere of true and healthy art, but does justice to the poem's power, pathos, and strange vague mystical charm.
1873. 'Athenæum,' May 10, rev. *Red Cotton Night-cap Country*.
1873. G. A. Simcox. 'Academy,' June 2, on *Red Cotton Night-cap Country*.
1873. 'Illustrated London News,' June 21, on *Red Cotton Night-cap Country*, on Devey's 'Comparative Estimate of Modern English Poets,' and the odd classification in it—which puts Browning with Goldsmith and Thomson, &c.
1873. 'A Comparative Estimate of Modern English Poets,' by J. Devey, M.A. of the Inner Temple. London: E. Moxon, Son & Co., 1873. The chapter on Browning, which closes the book, occupies pp. 376-421.—S.
1873. 'Master-Spirits.' By Robert Buchanan. Henry S. King & Co., 1873. On pp. 89-109 is a revised reprint of the 'Athenæum' Reviews of the *Ring and the Book* in Dec. 1869, and March 1870.¹ It ends, "Mr. Browning exhibits,—to a great extent in all his writings, but particularly in this work—a wealth of intellect and a perfection of spiritual insight which we have been accustomed to find in the pages of Shakspeare, and in those pages only. His fantastic intellectual feats, his verbosity, his power of quaint versification, are quite other matters. The one great and patent fact is, that, with a faculty in our own time at least unparalleled, he manages to create beings of thoroughly human fibre; he is just without judgment, without pre-occupation, to every being so created, and he succeeds, without a single didactic note, in stirring the soul of the spectator with the concentrated emotion and spiritual exaltation which heighten the soul's stature in the finest moments of life itself." See p. 95 above.
- The following poem has been sent me as by Robert Buchanan, and as in his 'Faces on the Wall;' but it is not in those contained in his 'Poetical Works,' 1874, ii. 337-347:
- "ROBERT BROWNING.
- "Bearded like some strong shipman, with a beam
Of grey orbs glancing upward at the sky,
O friend, thou standest, pondering thy theme,
And watching while the troublous days blow by. 4
Their cloudy signs and portents; then thine eye
Falleth, and reading with poetic gleam
The human lineaments that round thee lie,
Peers to the soul, and softens into dreams. 8
O dweller in the winds and waves of life,
Reader of living faces foul and fair,
No nobler mariner may mortal meet!
Stedfast and sure thou movest thro' the strife, 12
Knowing the signs and symbols of the air,
Yet gentle as the dews about thy feet." 14
1873. 'Living Voices.' Selections chiefly from Recent Poetry with a Preface by His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury. Strahan and Co., 56 Ludgate Hill, London, 1873. pp. 96-8. *In a year*. pp. 213-16. *How they brought the good news*. pp. 217-18. *Incident of the French Camp*.—C.
1873. 'Fly Leaves.' By C. S. Calverley, author of 'Verses and Translations.' 3rd. ed. Cambridge: Deighton, Bell & Co. London: Bell & Daldy, 1873. pp. 113-120. 'The Cock and the Bull,' a Parody on *The Ring and the Book*.—C.
1874. 'Contemporary Review,' May, 1874. pp. 934-965. 'Mr. Browning's Place in Literature,' by A. Orr. [Mrs. Sutherland Orr.]—C.

¹ It is headed "Browning's Masterpiece, *The Ring and the Book*."

1874. 'The Muses of May Fair.' By H. Chomondaly Pennell. London: Chatto & Windus, Piccadilly, 1874. pp. 60-2. 'A Likings' (Extract). p. 63. Song, 'Nay, but you, who do not love her.' p. 64. 'Youth and Art' (Extract).—C.
1875. J. A. Symonds. 'Academy,' April 17, 1875, rev. *Aristophanes' Apology*.
1875. 'Athenæum,' Nov. 27, pp. 701-2, on *The Inn Album*: . . . "we rank *The Inn Album* beyond *The Ring and the Book*. To us it seems almost equal to *Pippa Passes*."
1875. 'Athenæum,' April 17, pp. 513-14, rev. *Aristophanes' Apology*.
1875. J. A. Symonds. 'Academy,' Nov. 27, on *The Inn Album*. (Against it.)
1875. 'The Times,' Oct. 4, rev. *Aristophanes' Apology*.—C.
1875. A. C. Swinburne. Introduction to 'The Works of George Chapman: Poems and Minor Translations.' With an Introduction by Algernon Charles Swinburne. London: Chatto and Windus, Piccadilly, 1875, pp. 14-19. Pages 17-19 are on *Sordello*:—"Now if there is any great quality more perceptible than another in Mr. Browning's intellect, it is his decisive and incisive faculty of thought, his sureness and intensity of perception, his rapid and trenchant resolution of aim. To charge him with *obscurity*, is about as accurate as to call Lynceus purblind, or complain of the slowness of the telegraphic wire. He is something too much the reverse of obscure; he is too brilliant and subtle for the ready reader of a ready writer to follow with any certainty the track of an intelligence which moves with such incessant rapidity. . . the rate of his thought is to that of another man's, as the speed of a railway to that of a waggon (p. xiv) . . . Coleridge defined the style of Propertius as 'hard, not obscure,' . . . this is equally true in the main of *Sordello* (p. xv). . . The best parts of this poem also belong, in substance always, and sometimes in form, to the class of 'monodramas' or soliloquies of the spirit; a form to which the analytic genius of Mr. Browning leads him ever as by instinct to return (p. xviii) . . . the very essence of Mr. Browning's aim and method . . . is such as implies above all other things the possession of a quality the very opposite of obscurity—a faculty of spiritual illumination, rapid and intense and subtle as lightning, which brings to bear upon its central object, by way of direct and vivid illustration, every symbol and every detail on which its light is flashed in passing (p. xix)."
1875. McCrie, George.¹ 'The Religion of our Literature: Essays upon Thomas Carlyle, Robert Browning, Alfred Tennyson,' &c. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1875.—S.
1875. 'The Guardian,' June 9, on *Aristophanes' Apology*.—C.
1875. 'The Times,' Oct. 16, p. 4, col. 4, on 'Wit and Humour,' by the late genial editor of 'Punch' (Shirley Brooks), (Bradbury, Agnew & Co, London, 1875). "Gladstone Unmasked' is so clever a parody of *The Spanish Cloister* that Mr. Browning himself must be almost inclined to forgive it."—C.
1875. 'Macready's Reminiscences, and Selections from his Diaries and Letters.' Edited by Sir Frederick Pollock, Bart. In Two Volumes. London: Macmillan and Co., 1875. Contains *passim* many interesting particulars of Macready's intercourse with Browning and of his production of the two plays of *Strafford* and *A Blot in the Scutcheon*.—S.
1875. 'The Guardian,' Dec. 1, on *The Inn Album*: strongly against it.
1876. 'Church Quarterly Review,' July, on 'Scepticism of the Day—Matthew Arnold,' quotes *A Death in the Desert*, on p. 296; and on p. 303, the five last stanzas of *Gold Hair, a Legend of Pornic*.

¹ This feeble and pretentious religionist understands Browning's glorious Invocation to his wife: "O Lyric Love, half angel, and half bird," in the *Ring and the Book*, to apply to Christ! "Though Lyric Love is here a quality personified, it seems to be so interchangeably with Christ. . . This is the interpretation we attach to the lines, though we have heard that some interpreters have actually considered them to be addressed to his wife!" p. 87.—F.

1876. Henry Morley, a few words on Browning: quotes bits of *Paracelsus*, *Sordello*, and all *Memorabilia* and *Andrea del Sarto*, in 'Cassell's Library of English Literature: 'Shorter Poems,' pp. 467-471.
1876. [F. Pollock]. 'Leading Cases done into English.' By an Apprentice of Lincoln's Inn. Reprinted from the 'Pall Mall Gazette,' 2nd edition, London: Macmillan and Co. "IV. Scott v. Shepherd (1 Smith's *Leading Cases*, 477). 'Any Pleader to any Student: 'Now, you're my Pupil,'" pp. 15-19, is a parody on R. B. (The next "V.—'Wigglesworth v. Dallison,'" pp. 20-25, is a parody on Tennyson.)
1872. Alfred Domett [*Waring*] in *Ranolf and Amohia*, p. 342: see p. 162 below.
- "By him whose lays like eagles, still upwheeling
To that sky Empyrean of high feeling
Whether he paint, all patience or pure snow,
Pompilia's fluttering innocence unsoiled
In verse, tho' fresh as dew, one *lava flow*
In fervour,—with rich Titian dyes, a glow—
Paint Paracelsus to grand frenzy stung:
Quixotic dreams and fiery quackeries foiled;—
Or of *Sordello's* delicate spirit unstrung
For action in its vast Ideal's glare,
Blasting the Real to its own dumb despair,
On that Venetian water-lapped stair-flight,
In words condensed to diamond, indite
A lay dark—splendid as star-spangled night;—
Still—though the pulses of the world-wide throng
He wields, with racy life-blood beat so strong,
Subtlest Assertor of the Soul in Song."—A. DOMETT.
1876. 'Walter Savage Landor: A Biography.' By John Forster. London: Chapman and Hall, 1876. Contains some interesting particulars of Browning's residence in Italy and of his intercourse with Landor.—S.
1876. Prof. E. Dowden. 'Academy,' July 29, on *Pacchiarotto*.
1876. F. J. F. (on *Inn Album*), 5 *N. & Q.*, v. 244. See p. 67, note, above.
1876. 'The Guardian,' Sept. 27, on *Pacchiarotto*.—C.
1876. 'Public Opinion,' July 29, reproduces some weak insolence of the 'Liverpool Daily Post' on *Pacchiarotto*.—C.
1876. 'Macmillan,' March, 1876, pp. 418-429. 'William Bell Scott and Modern British Poetry.' Signed, W. M. Rossetti. pp. 425-6 are on R. Browning.—C.
1876. Mr. Browning's *Inn Album*. By A. C. Bradley. 'Macmillan's Magazine,' February, 1876 (vol. xxxiii. pp. 347-354).—S.
1876. 'Victorian Poets.' By Edmund Clarence Stedman. London: Chatto and Windus, 1876. The ninth chapter, on Robert Browning, occupies pp. 293-341 of the volume.—S.
1876. 'Athenæum,' July 22, pp. 101-2, on *Pacchiarotto*, &c. "Mr. Browning came into notice an etcher. Etching . . . is a species of shorthand. . . To the appreciative critic it stands not for what it actually offers to the eye, but for what it suggests. . . Mr. Browning is, and always has been, an etcher. . . His mistake all through has been to suppose that people will take the trouble to wrestle with difficulties; that because his longer poems are worth understanding, the public would try to understand them. . . If there is a defect in it [the *Pacchiarotto* volume] it is that Mr. Browning betrays a tendency to quarrel with his critics, and to write not so much about himself as *at* himself. . . If a man chooses to say that Mr. Browning is grotesque, uncouth, chaotic, and no poet, the criticism may possibly please the critic, and cannot possibly hurt Mr. Browning."
1876. The Index to 'The Atlantic Monthly,' volumes I.-XXXVIII. (1857-1876). Boston: Houghton & Co., 1877, gives in its Index to "Authors, with the contributions of each" to that journal "Browning, Robert *Gold Hair* (vol.) xiii. (p.) 596; *Prospice*, xiii. 694; *Under the Cliff*, xiii. 737." This means that the publisher got advance-copies of the *Dramatis Personæ*, 1864, and reprinted

- three of the poems in his Journals. Mr. Moncure Daniel Conway is entered as having written an 'editorial' on the *Ring and the Book* in vol. xxiii. p. 256; Mr. Howells another on *The Inn Album* in xxxvii. 372. The want of an index to the 'books reviewed' prevented my finding more notices in the time I had to spare.
1876. James Thomson, in 'The Secularist' on *Pacchiarotto*.
1877. Henry Morley, on Browning's *Christmas-Eve and Easter Day*, with quotations in 'Cassell's Library of English Literature: Illustrations of English Religion,' pp. 428-9.
1877. No. 14. Price 6d. 'The Portrait.' A Photograph and Memoir. *Robert Browning*. Provost and Co., 36, Henrietta Street, Covent Garden. The portrait is from a Photograph by Messrs Elliott and Fry. The Memoir, 4 pages 4to, is by G. Barnett Smith. It ends "Since Byron, Shelley, and Wordsworth sang, we have had no greater imaginative spirit, none with a genius more manly and robust, than Robert Browning. As regards the extent and quality of his original endowments, he is the equal—if indeed he has not the precedence—of any living poet. Men have yet to grow in the understanding of him. . . ."
1877. 'Judy,' 31 Jan. Cut of a policeman or bobby roasting on a jack before a fire, with legend, "Who's this? Who? Why, you can see it at a glance—ROBERT, BROWNING."—C.
1877. 'Contemporary Review,' July, 1877. pp. 297-318. 'The Transcendental movement and Literature,' by Edward Dowden. pp. 316-318.—R. B. "represents militant transcendentalism."—C. Reprinted in E. D.'s 'Studies,' 1878.
1877. 'Athenæum,' Oct. 27, on *The Agamemnon of Æschylus*.¹
1877. 'The Bazaar,' Nov. 7, on the *Agamemnon*.—C.
1877. 'Saturday Review,' Nov. 17, on Translations of the *Agamemnon*: 1. by Robert Browning; 2. by E. D. A. Morshead, M.A.—C.
1877. J. A. Symonds. 'Academy,' Nov. 3, on *The Agamemnon of Æschylus*. "The Herculean achievement of a scholar-poet's ripe genius. . . The more we examine the workmanship of Mr. Browning's version, comparing English and Greek verses in detail, the more reason shall we have to wonder at his dexterity in matching word with word, and maintaining the exact order of the original."
1877. Letters of Elizabeth Barrett Browning, addressed to Richard Hengist Horne, with Preface and Memoir by Richard Henry Stoddard. New York: James Miller, Publisher, 1877. The Memoir often mentions Browning from p. xix to xxxvii, gives, from G. S. Hillard, the anecdote of Browning's introduction to Miss Barrett, their marriage, a description of their room at Florence, Bayard Taylor's account of the Brownings, R. B.'s pretty letter about his wife and boy, to Leigh Hunt, and hers on the boy then 8 years old, &c. See 'Additions' below.
1877. Alfred Donett (*Waring*). 'Flotsam and Jetsam; rhymes old and new.' London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1877. "To (if ever there were one!) 'a mighty Poet and a subtle-souled Psychologist,'—to Robert Browning, this little Book, with a hearty wish that the Tribute were worthier, is affectionately inscribed." On p. 25-27 are 51 "Lines sent to Robert Browning, 1841," on a certain Critique on *Pippa Passes*, by "A black squat beetle—a Pert, self-complacent Scarabeus"—who, because he can't scale a mountain in his way, swears 'There's no such thing as any mountain there';—by a bustling Cockchafer who tries to measure an Eagle, and finds that as he 'can only see a dot just like himself, the Bird must be as small.' The poem begins thus:—
 "Ho! every one that by the nose is led,
 Automatons of which the world is full!
 You myriad bodies each without a head
 That dangle dolt-like from a critic's skull! . . ."

¹ Mr. F. A. Paley wrote a note in the 'Athenæum' of Nov. 11, contradicting a letter by Mr. Swinburne in the no. of Nov. 4, and saying that Browning and Mr. Swinburne were both wrong in their construing of lines 1672-3 of the *Agamemnon*, while both Mr. Morshead and Miss Anna Swanwick were right.

1878. Browning's Poems. 'Church Quarterly Review,' Oct., 1878, pp. 65-92. By the Hon. & Rev. Arthur Lyttelton. "In the difficulty of his style Mr. Browning is not alone; many great poets have found it impossible to express deep thoughts to the satisfaction of shallow readers (p. 67). . . . We should . . . hold the true explanation of the rough and crude expression of his thought to be, not his ignorance of the value of form, but his intense desire to grasp the matter, to penetrate to the innermost meaning of the facts with which he is dealing (p. 68) . . . the disregard of the form of his poems, in his eager haste to express the matter, is only a particular case of the general characteristic of Mr. Browning's mind, which leads him

'To bring the invisible full into play !

Let the visible go to the dogs—what matters ?'

. . . Mr. Browning's preference of matter to form is the result of what is perhaps the most fundamental characteristic of his mind, the belief that imperfection is a mark of progress, that man is superior to the beasts just because he is not made with all his powers complete for their work in his life, but must struggle onwards by means of failure in this world, to the perfection which can only be attained in the next (p. 70). . . . His [Browning's] genius is essentially dramatic in one sense, namely, that he can leave his own personality to put himself into the position, or even into the very heart and soul of another person. In this faculty he is, we venture to say, second to no poet, unless it be Shakespeare . . . and his imagination also seems to seize hold on their (his personages') deepest emotions, and give words to them with a power which, we repeat, is more nearly equal to Shakespeare's similar power, than is that of any other poet. In *The Last Ride Together*, for instance, the line—

'Who knows but the world may end to-night ?'

may for depth and vividness of imaginative power be compared with Macduff's 'He has no children,' which is Mr. Ruskin's highest instance of this kind of imagination. . . . But in what is more strictly dramatic power, the power of dramatic action, Mr. Browning is notably deficient. The whole interest of his dramas or dramatic monologues lies in the varying states of mind of the characters represented. The action is nothing, and the personages are interesting to the poet, not because of what they do, but of what they think and feel (p. 73). . . . For him there are two great realities :—

'Truth inside [man's soul], and outside, truth also [God] ; and between
Each, falsehood that is change, as truth is permanence.
The individual soul works through the shows of sense,
(Which ever proving false, still promise to be true),
Up to an outer soul as individual too ;
And, through the fleeting, lives to die into the fixed,
And reach at length " God, man, or both together mixed,"' . . .

Fifine, p. 156-7.

"If, as a matter of fact, he believes that the events recorded in the Gospels really happened, this is little more than an accidental circumstance ; it does not seem to him to be of any real importance whether they did or not. In *A Death in the Desert* the question as to the reality of Christ's miracles is, not avoided, but neglected as unimportant (pp. 79-80). . . . The only two truths being the soul and God, 'and between each, falsehood,' the method by which God works upon the soul must be by means of falsehood, or at best, of 'the shows o' the world.' As they are only shows, 'mere mists,' the question whether any particular combination of them really took place or not is insignificant, and the poet treats it doubtfully and vaguely (p. 81) . . . it is from his firm belief in God's Love that the poet has attained to the two great Christian truths which so continually come up in his writings, viz. the Incarnation and Immortality. p. 83. [This is well worked out thro' *Easter Day*, *A Death in the Desert*, *Saul* (a fine comment, p. 86), *La Saisiaz*, *Christmas Eve*, *Abt Vogler*]. . . . In all these cases and many others, we see the conception of immortality entering into every part of Mr. Browning's experience of life, dignifying things that would otherwise seem trivial, making perfect the manifold imperfections of this world. . . . It is this conviction of the future, this intense belief that 'no work begun shall

ever pause for death,' that raises Mr. Browning's interest in man, and his persistent examination and analysis of characters and deeds which many would think unworthy to be touched, to a dignity which would not be possible if human life were bounded by this world, or even if the future life were to be, as so many believe, entirely separate and distinct in its nature from this. A future life in which nothing of our present existence survives, which is merely the reward, and not the result, of the good which has been attained here, is not Mr. Browning's conception of our promised immortality; and therefore to him all those traits of character that had almost perished, those persons and deeds that but for him no one could have remembered, are of intense interest, because in his eyes they have an eternal significance (pp. 88-9). . . . (p. 92) In conclusion, then, we should wish our readers to take this as the noblest characteristic of Mr. Browning's genius: this power of exalting man and man's deeds, not by idealizing him, or by taking him out of the real conditions of his life, but by giving him his true dignity as an immortal being, whom God's love has placed here to grow and prepare himself for a wider, more perfect life hereafter. We cannot fail to learn from Mr. Browning's poems a higher and nobler, because a truer, conception of mankind; for he bases his sympathy with men, and his firm belief in their great destiny, on a truth that can never alter, the truth that God is Love." An Article to be read by all students of Browning.

1878. G. A. Simcox. 'Academy,' June 1, on *La Saisiaz*, and *Croisic*. "Like Descartes, Mr. Browning establishes the two ultimate facts of God and the soul by a simple appeal to consciousness . . . we get one of the most forcible statements in the English language of the unsatisfactory nature of the conditions we live under, and of the illusory nature of all the palliations suggested by them who wish to discredit the old one, that there is a better life to come." His poet's *Confession of Faith* is summed up in a line, "Well? why he at least believed in Soul, was very sure of God." . . . "The main problem of the poem [*Croisic*] . . . is . . . the tragedy of abortive endeavour, complicated with the comedy of momentary success."
1878. 'Athenæum,' May 25, pp. 661-4, on *La Saisiaz*. "No poet since Burns—none, perhaps, since Shakspeare—has known and felt as deeply as Mr. Browning, the pathos of human life . . . none realizes, as he does, the unutterable pathos of the tangled web as a whole." By W. Theodore Watts. His best, he says.
1878. 'Edinburgh Review,' April, 1878. pp. 409-436. Browning's *Agamemnon*, and Campbell's 'Trachinixæ.'—C.
1878. 'Saturday Review,' June 15, on *La Saisiaz* (&) *The Two Poets of Croisic*.
1878. 'The Times,' June 20. Royal Academy of Music. Notice of a Student's, Miss Oliveria Prescott's, symphony in D minor, called 'Alkestis,' "suggested by the version of *Euripides*'s tragedy in Mr. Browning's *Balaustion's Adventure*."
1878. Rev. J. Kirkman.¹ Letter in 'The Times' of Sept. 25, on the autumn blossoming of the laburnum, instancing Browning's lines on 'That apple-tree with a rare after-birth,' in *Paracelsus*.
1878. 'The Guardian,' Dec. 4, on *La Saisiaz* [&] *The Two Poets of Croisic*.
- Lantern Readings (no place, pubn. or date). *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, illustrated by 12 Lantern Pictures. "The following extracts from the *P. P. of H.*, are given for those not familiar with the piece. To purchasers of the pictures a copy of vol. iv. of Carpenter's 'Penny Readings,' that contains the entire piece, is supplied." (I never saw the pictures).—C.
1879. 'Studies in Literature,' 1789-1877. By Edward Dowden, LL.D. London: C. K. Paul & Co. Contains revized Reprints of the Articles on 'The Transcendental Movement and Literature' (Mr. Browning's place in recent literature), and on 'Mr. Tennyson and Mr. Browning,' 1877, 1869, noted above, p. 103, 96. These able appreciative articles should be read.

¹ Mr. Kirkman a few years ago gave a set of lectures at Hampstead on *Sordello* which were largely attended, and greatly interested the audience. He is to deliver the Inaugural Address at the first meeting of the Browning Society.

1879. G. Barnett Smith, in 'The International Review,' for February; 19 quarto pages on the general aspects of Browning's Poetry.
1879. Contemporary Portraits. § Robert Browning. With photograph of Mr. Browning by Elliott and Fry, copied by the Woodbury process: and facsimile of his autograph. 'The University Magazine, a Literary and Philosophic Review,' March and April, 1879. London: Hurst and Blackett, vol. iii. pp. 322-335, 416-443. Contains some interesting particulars of the poet's youth and parentage.—S. It is the most trustworthy account then published.
1879. 'The Boy's Own Paper.' London: Leisure Hour Office, vol. i, Part II. No. 10, p. 151. March 22, 1879. *How they brought the Good News, &c.* With Frontispiece of the Ride.—C.
1879. Mr. Browning's *Dramatic Idyls*. [Series I.] By Mrs. Sutherland Orr. 'Contemporary Review,' May, 1879, vol. xxxv. pp. 289-302.—S.
1879. 'Athenæum,' May 10, on *Dramatic Idyls*, I. "Martin Ralph, Ned Bratt, and Halbert and Hob are illustrations, from different points of view—of the terrors of conscience. This has always been a favourite subject with Mr. Browning, and perhaps no other modern writer has treated it in so masterly a manner. . . With him, the special terror of conscience is always, as in *Pippa Passes*, its treachery; it is always a snake coiled in the bosom, whose fang, as delineated by him, is hardly so well expressed by the Latin word *remorse*, as by [its English equivalent] the name of . . . Dan Michell[s]. . . 'Ayen-bite of Inwytt,' the 'again-biting of the inner knowledge' . . . 'ayenbite of inwytt' exactly expresses Mr. Browning's idea of conscience." (By Mr. Walter Theodore Watts.)
1879. F. Wedmore. 'Academy,' May 10, *Dramatic Idyls*, I.
1879. 'Saturday Review,' June 21, on *Dramatic Idyls*, I.
1879. F. Wedmore, in 'The Academy,' May 10, pp. 403-4, on *Dramatic Idyls* (I.). "Mr. Browning has not found increasing years make so much a difference of quality as a difference of kind in his poetry. Convinced at first that 'Thought is what young men want in verse,' he has waxed . . . yet more occupied with the mental interest of his subject . . . in the main the dramatic interest . . . has gained yet more in importance over the interest of sense, the interest of skilled manipulation . . . because, perhaps, of the generally increasing weight of thought and dramatic interest in his work, the manner of the work has changed, so that it may be roughly said that while his *By the Fireside*, with its tender reverie, was like a symphony of Mendelssohn's, and some of his lyrics like the *Songs without Words*, much of his later work—that of the *Inn Album*: this of *Dramatic Idyls*—comes to us with the clash and clang of the music of Wagner, or . . . at all events like 'Beethoven's Titan mace.'"
- 1879 or 1880. 'National Portrait Gallery,' Part 70. London: Cassells No date. Robert Browning, pp. 73-80. Written by Mr. G. Barnett Smith. With Chromolithograph of R. B.—C.
1879. *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. By Robert Browning. Illustrated by Jane E. Cook, author of "The Sculptor caught Napping," King Alfred's School, Wantage, Berks, Photographed and Printed by the Autotype Company's Process of Permanent Facsimile. London: Printed for Private Circulation. 1879. The work was favourably reviewed in 'The Times' of April 10, 1880, the 'Academy,' 'Art Journal,' 'World,' 'Architect,' 'Daily Telegraph,' 'British Architect,' 'Builder,' 'Athenæum,' and 'Standard,' which last says: "The drawings are nine in number. The first represents the rats 'biting the babies in their cradles and licking the soup from the cook's own ladles.' The next represents the rats 'worrying the dogs, killing the cats, and making nests in men's new hats.' There is life and vigour in all the characters. In the third the appearance of the Pied Piper, who offers to the Burgomaster and his Council to clear the town of rats, is cleverly depicted, while nothing could be well more humorous than the expression on the face of the fat old Burgomaster and his colleagues. The fourth picture, representing the rats tumbling by dozens into the Weser, and the Piper standing up on the quay playing vigorously, while men, women, and children are crowding up behind him to see the destruction of the common foe, is wonderfully clever and full of 'go.' In the remainder of the series Mrs. Cook sustains the same appearance

- of vigour. In fact, in a manner, the life she has thrown into her work appears to be an echo of Browning's own vivacity of expression and idea." But it must be recollected that the work *is* an amateur's. See Verstegan, 1605, for the story.
1880. The Browning Bookmarkers. 12 tall, narrow, tinted, gilt-edged cards, with a woodcut on each, illustrating the few lines from Browning quoted underneath it. Chas. Goodall and Son, London.
1880. 'The Times,' April 10, on *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. By Robert Browning. Illustrated by Jane E. Cook. Printed for private circulation, 1879. "The action and general drawing of the figures in the nine illustrations show an artistic faculty, far above most amateurs."
1880. 'Bazaar,' May 12. 'What Cæsar said of Cassius—"He thinks too much: such men are dangerous"—would seem to express the feeling of a certain portion of the British public toward Mr. Robert Browning. These are mostly of the "sleek-headed, and such as sleep o' night's" order of citizens, whose distrust of the thinking and thought-compelling poet carries its own condemnation. Happily, however, there is an increasing number of English readers who find in the poems of Mr. Browning an intellectual feast, and who will rejoice to learn that a fresh volume of *Dramatic Idyls* from his pen is likely to make an early appearance.'—C.
1880. 'Men of Mark.' London: Sampson, Low and Co., No. for June 1880. Robert Browning, 1 page. With Photo, by Lock and Whitfield.—C.
1880. 'Judy,' June 2. 'The Pipe of Peace:' "Must we always fight, love." Parody on (59) *A Woman's Last Word*: "Let's contend no more, Love."—C.
1880. 'The Pen,' June 12 and 19. 'Our Living Authors.' Robert Browning. 'One of the most original personalities of contemporary literature.'—C.
1880. 'Judy,' July 7. 'Judy's Model Poets,' No. 4. "The Quest of Barparlo." By Robert Browning.
1880. 'Athenæum,' July 10, pp. 39-41, on *Dramatic Idyls*: Second Series. [By W. Th. Watts: not a son of Alaric Watts.] The volume is full of power, picturesqueness, and beauty, and displays the astonishing agility of intellect, which has always been a characteristic of Mr. Browning's poetry, and which years seem not to weaken, but rather to strengthen. In point of humour, however, it is not equal to the first series of *Dramatic Idyls*, while its metrical peculiarities are more pronounced. . . . It is an error to think that Mr. Browning's genius naturally falters in metrical expression. Hundreds of passages might be culled from his poems, in which the music is quite new, quite his own, and entirely beautiful; but there are times when his persistent quest of original movements leads him astray. . . . Of the grotesquerie of rhythm as well as of rhyme, he is certainly the greatest master in our language. . . . Mr. Browning, notwithstanding his passion for Italy . . . is more Teutonic in genius than any other English poet of our century."
1880. 'Literary World,' July 23, rev. *Dramatic Idyls*. Second Series.—C.
1880. 'The Times,' Aug. 23, p. 3, col. 5, on *Dramatic Idyls*, II.—C.
1880. 'The Guardian,' Sept. 22, rev. *Dramatic Idyls*. Second Series.—C.
1880. 'The Times,' Dec. 8. Report of Prof. Hy. Morley's Lecture on 'The Literature of To-Day, with a Guess at To-Morrow's.' "They had seen Robert Browning and others following the lead of Wordsworth with a clear understanding that it was possible to lift the human race to a height far above the present level, but that this could only be done by labouring for the development of each individual citizen.—C.
1880. [A. C. Swinburne.] 'Specimens of Modern Poets The Heptalogia or the Seven against Sense A Cap with seven Bells'. . . Chatto & Windus, 1880. "John Jones," pp. 9-39 is meant as a parody on *James Lee*: it is curiously dull and poor, no atom of fun or humour in it.
1881. 'Academy,' July 9, and following numbers. The Browning Society started; and other details, letters from me, &c.
1881. Miss Mary A. Lewis (of our Society's Committee). 'Two pretty Girls.' A few lines in vol. II. on Browning's strong Christian feeling.

1881. Henry Morley, on Browning's *Ring and the Book*, in 'Cassell's Library of English Literature: Larger Works in Verse and Prose,' pp. 402-404. Quotes "O lyric Love," 'the Pope's estimate of Caponsacchi, "Nay, Caponsacchi, much I find amiss,"' and the end of the poem from 'So, British public.'¹
1881. James Thomson. In his prose 'Essays and Phantasies.' Reeves & Turner, 1881. Browning is quoted or mentioned on the following pages:—
 p. 30. Three lines from *Paracelsus*. p. 126. 'Our only commanding poet.'
 p. 130. One line from *Last Ride Together*. p. 140. *Bishop Blougram's Apology*.
 p. 173. One line of *The Statue and Bust*.
 p. 289. 'Immeasurably superior to — in depth, scope, power and subtlety of intellect,' etc.
 p. 294. Note. 'Earnestly strenuous spirits (Browning and Geo. Meredith) swifter than eagles, stronger than lions, in whom, to use the magnificent and true language of Coleridge concerning Shakespeare, "The intellectual power and the creative energy wrestle as in a war,"' etc.
 See also Mr. Thomson's 'Notes on Poems of William Blake,' 'National Reformer,' early in 1867 (?), but written two or three years earlier. In these, Browning's true and splendid genius, vigorous and restless talents, etc.—are spoken of.

The extracts at the end of some of the entries above are only bits of those made in a note-book when it chanced to be near while I was reading a review.² Of the later articles, those by Prof. Dowden, Miss E. D. West ('Dark Blue,' 1871), and Mr. Lyttelton (Church Quarterly, 1878), with those in the 'Contemporary' of 1867, the 'Christian Remembrancer,' Oct. 1857, and the 'Eclectic Rev.' 1849, are the best worth reading. The article in 'The University Mag.' March 1880, gives the facts and dates of Browning's family and history most correctly.

V. PERSONAL NOTICES.

"The Browning family comes from Dorsetshire. The grandfather of the poet was a landed proprietor, the father a clerk in the Bank of England, who, like Charles Lamb in the office which he used to enter late, and therefore leave early, was by no means a clerk and nothing more. This Browning was one of a class that is becoming smaller and smaller, under the pressure of modern life and its sciences. He was a scholar of the old-fashioned classical kind. His knowledge was extensive, and of out-of-the-way subjects; he was not like the new generation—eternally posing for the market. His friends knew that he was an authority on the 'Letters of Junius,' the best-informed man upon the pictures of Hogarth, and upon many another special thing. A reference to him now and then naturally crept into print; but he kept his life his own, and steadily embodied in himself, in its best sense, the maxim: "*bene vixit qui bene latuit*." He had verse power, though he

¹ Prof. Morley's poem, at the end of this work, on the noble and Christian spirit of all English Literature from its rise till now, will interest any reader.

² In *Paracelsus*, Pt. III. l. 640-4, Browning makes his hero say, that if he fails to reach some of his hearers,

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"The luckless rogues have this excuse to urge,
 That much is in my method and my manner,
 My uncouth habits, my impatient spirit,
 Which hinders of reception and result
 My doctrine: too much to say, small skill to speak!"

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Many 'luckless rogues' of the critic tribe—I haven't thought 'em worth quoting—have since urged the like excuse for their want of reciprocity of the Poet's own teaching. And he has himself good-humouredly admitted to his brother-poet the Chinese Ambassador, that the epithet applied by that luminary to his own poetry, "enigmatic," may also be justly given to Robert Browning's: see p. 112-113, below. In the pace that much review work of the present day is done at, *there is no time for thinking*.

did not publish. He was fond of the classic poets, and used to carry his son in his arms, singing him to sleep with 'Anacreon' in the original, to the tune of 'A Cottage in a Wood.' He was a man of singular high-mindedness, the action of which quality once decided his path in life, and away from a more lucrative career than a clerkship in the Bank of England. He died not very long ago [14th June, 1866], never having had a day's illness until the last. His wife, the mother of the present Robert Browning, was of Scotch family." ('University Magazine,' March, 1879.)

1852. 'Harper's New Monthly Magazine,' vol. iv. no. 22, pp. 505-7. Extracts from Miss Mary Russell Mitford's 'Personal Sketches and Reminiscences.' "Married Poets.—Elizabeth Barrett Browning—Robert Browning." . . .

"About four years ago she married Mr. Browning, and immediately accompanied him to Pisa. They then settled at Florence, and this summer I have had the exquisite pleasure of seeing her once more in London, with a lovely boy at her knee. . . The same visit to London that brought me acquainted with my beloved friend, Elizabeth Barrett, first gave me a sight of Mr. Browning. It was at a period that forms an epoch in the annals of the modern drama—the first representation of 'Ion' . . . it was our host's birthday, and no one present can forget the triumph of the evening . . . A large party followed the poet home to supper, a party comprising distinguished persons of almost every class . . . healths were drunk and speeches spoken, and it fell to the lot of the young author of *Paracelsus* to respond to the toast of 'The Poets of England.' That he performed his task with grace and modesty, and that he looked still younger than he was, I well remember; but we were not introduced, and I knew him only by those successive works which redeemed the pledge that *Paracelsus* had given, until this very summer, [1851] when going to London purposely to meet my beloved friend, I was by her presented to her husband."

1853. 'Six Months in Italy.' By George Stillman Hillard. In two Volumes.—Vol. I. London: John Murray, Albemarle Street, 1853, pp. 139-140. "ROBERT AND ELIZABETH BROWNING. . . I trust I may be pardoned if I state that one of my most delightful associations with Florence, arises from the fact that here I made the acquaintance of Robert and Elizabeth Browning. These are even more familiar names in America than in England, and their poetry is probably more read and better understood with us than among their own countrymen. A happier home and a more perfect union than theirs it is not easy to imagine; and this completeness arises, not only from the rare qualities which each possesses, but from their adaptation to each other. Browning's conversation is like the poetry of Chaucer, or like his own simplified and made transparent. His countenance is so full of vigour, freshness, and refined power, that it seems impossible to think that he can ever grow old. His poetry is subtle, passionate, and profound; but he himself is simple, natural, and playful. He has the repose of a man who has lived much in the open air; with no nervous uneasiness and no unhealthy self-consciousness. Mrs. Browning is in many respects the correlative of her husband. As he is full of manly power, so she is a type of the most sensitive and delicate womanhood. She has been a great sufferer from ill health, and the marks of pain are stamped upon her person and manner. Her figure is slight, her countenance expressive of genius and sensibility, shaded by a veil of long brown locks: and her tremulous voice often flutters over her words, like the flame of a dying candle over the wick. I have never seen a human frame which seemed so nearly a transparent veil for a celestial and immortal spirit. She is a soul of fire enclosed in a shell of pearl. Her rare and fine genius needs no setting forth at my hands. She is also, what is not so generally known, a woman of uncommon, nay, profound learning, even measured by a masculine standard. Nor is she more remarkable for genius and learning than for sweetness of temper, tenderness of heart, depth of feeling, and purity of spirit. It is a privilege to know such beings singly and separately; but to see their powers quickened, and their happiness rounded, by the sacred tie of marriage, is a cause for peculiar and lasting gratitude. A union so complete as theirs—in which the mind has nothing to crave, nor the heart to sigh for—is cordial to behold, and cheering to remember." pp. 113-14. 5th ed. 1866, Boston, U.S.A.

1861. 'Harper's New Monthly Magazine,' No. 136, Sept., vol. xxiii. No. 136, p. 555, col. 2 (under "Editor's Easy Chair." See too p. 563, col. 1). "Fourteen years ago (in 1847) this Easy Chair was sitting one day in his cool room in Florence—cool, although it was Italy and summer. A knock at the door was followed by the brisk entrance of one of the few men in Europe that Mr. Easy Chair then cared to see—Robert Browning. How delightful the hour that followed was, those at once know who know Robert Browning. It ended with a promise of meeting at Browning's tea-table that evening.

"In the evening the same alert, robust, thoroughly English-looking man presented to his wife one of the thousand young Americans who had read with eager enthusiasm her then recently-published volumes, which had a more general and hearty welcome in the United States than any English poet since the time of Byron and Company, who were the poets of our fathers.

"The visitor saw, seated at the tea-table of the great room of the palace in which they were living, a very small, very slight woman, with very long curls drooping forward, almost across the eyes, hanging to the bosom, and quite concealing the pale, small face, from which the piercing, inquiring eyes looked out sensitively at the stranger. Rising from her chair, she put out cordially the thin white hand of an invalid, and in a few moments they were pleasantly chatting while the husband strode up and down the room, joining in the conversation with a vigor, humor, eagerness, and affluence of curious lore which, with his trenchant thought and subtle sympathy, make him one of the most charming and inspiring of companions.

"A few days after, the same party, with one or two more, went to Vallambrosa, where they passed two days. Mrs. Browning was still too much of an invalid to walk, but we sat under the great trees upon the lawn-like hill-sides near the convent, or in the seats in the dusky convent-chapel, while Robert Browning at the organ chased a fugue of Master Hugues, of Saxe-Gotha, or dreamed out upon twilight keys a faint-throbbing toccata of Galuppi's.

"In all her conversation, so mild and tender and womanly, so true and intense and rich with rare learning, there was a girl-like simplicity and sensitiveness, and a womanly earnestness that took the heart captive. She was deeply and most intelligently interested in America and Americans, and felt a kind of enthusiastic gratitude to them for their generous fondness of her poetry.

"She had then been married not a year, and since then she has lived almost exclusively in Italy. Few Italians, and certainly no foreigner, are so saturated with the very spirit of Italy as her husband; and few Italians, and no foreigner, have been more enthusiastically devoted than she, to the political regeneration of that country. Her poems within a few years had been almost exclusively inspired by her Italian political sympathies, and have insensibly been much moulded in their expression by the style of her husband.

"Without question or delay, Elizabeth Barrett Browning must be counted among the chief English poets of this century, and unquestionably the first English poet of her sex [Yes! Yes!]. And her memorable excellence will be that she was not only a singer, but a hearty active worker in her way, understanding her time, and trying, as she could, to help it. It is a curious juxtaposition, that of 'Don Juan' and 'Aurora Leigh,' and yet they are related in this, that they are the two great poems of modern English social life as felt by a man of the world and a religious woman, who were both poets. On the other hand, the literature of love has had few additions since the *Vita Nuova*, the sonnet of Shakespeare, and of Petrarch (if you like him), so true and sweet and subtle as Mrs. Browning's 'Sonnets from the Portuguese' [to her husband before their marriage]. And were they not repaid by the *One word more*, the last poem in Browning's last volume? (*Men and Women*, 1855).

"Her public fame will make her widely mentioned. Literature mourns a loss. But the private grief to the many who loved her is a deeper pang. Her death changes Italy and Europe to how many! If you would know what she was, read Browning's *One word more* (and *O Lyric Love*, &c.). He made no secret of it; why should another?"

"*This I say of me, but think of you, Love!*
This to you, yourself my moon of poets!"

Ah ! but that's the world's side—there's the wonder—
 Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you ;
 There, in turn, I stand with them and praise you,
 Out of my own self I dare to phrase it.
 But the best is when I glide from out them,
 Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,
 Come out on the other side, the novel
 Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,
 Where I hush and bless myself with silence."

INSCRIPTION ON CASA GUIDI, VIA MAGGIO 9. FLORENCE.

QUI SCRISSE E MORI
 ELISABETTA BARRET-BROWNING
 CHE IN CUORE DI DONNA CONCILIAVA
 SCIENZA DI DOTTO E SPIRITO DI POETA
 E FECE DEL SUO VERSO AUREO ANELLO
 FRA ITALIA E INGHILTERRA
 PONE QUESTA MEMORIA
 FIRENZE GRATA

1861.

Copied by T. W. C., April 17, 1876.

1872. 'Athenæum,' Feb. 3, p. 147. "Mr. Robert Browning has given leave to Mr. Furnivall to reprint for the Chaucer Society those parts of Mrs. Barrett Browning's English Poets . . . which relate to Chaucer. . . ."—C.
1873. 'Dublin Express,' Jan. 29. 'MISS BLAGDEN. There has just died at Florence, a lady well known in the world of letters . . . Miss Isa Blagden, the authoress of "Agnes Tremorne" . . . was linked to Mr. BROWNING and his illustrious wife by the ties of the closest friendship. She nursed [that is, did not nurse] the poetess in her final illness. . . .'—C.
1874. 'Press (? Dublin paper),' March 7. "We regret to hear of the death, at Camberwell, on the 4th instant, of Mr. William Shergold Browning, uncle of the poet Mr. Robert Browning. Mr. W. S. Browning was himself a contributor to literature ; his best-known work being a 'History of the Huguenots.'"—C.
1875. 'Dublin Express,' Jan. 26. "The petition of persons engaged in professional and literary work, which has been presented to Parliament, against any interference with the New Forest, is signed, among others, by Mr. BROWNING, Mr. Carlyle, Mr. Ruskin."—C.
1876. 'The Times,' March 10. "Account of the Funeral of the late Lady Augusta Stanley, wife of the late Dean Stanley. One of the pall-bearers is 'Mr. Robert Browning.'"—C.
1876. 'The Times,' May 8. 'Representatives of Literature at the Mansion-House : ' the Lord Mayor's Dinner to them.—C. (Browning was got there by a promise that he should not be asked to speak. The Lord Mayor nevertheless came down on him to answer for 'Poetry,' but he refused, and Sir Francis Doyle was put on. He's not been to another Lord Mayor's dinner.)
1876. 'The Times,' Tuesday, Dec. 5. Among the Conveners of the National Conference on the Eastern Question—to protest against Lord Beaconsfield's action for Turkey and stop war with Russia, the 6th name is "Robert Browning." (Opposite, 2 lines lower in the advertisement, is 'F. J. Furnivall.')—C.
1878. 'The Evening Mail, Dublin,' Jan. 7. 1. Telegram of the Press Association, saying that among a large number of adhesions to the Committee for securing the neutralization and free navigation of the Straits of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, was that of ROBERT BROWNING. 2. Insolent Leader against the Committee, Robert Browning, &c., for their 'attack upon Lord Beaconsfield.'—C.
1878. 'Light,' April 20. The memorial against war, which is to be presented to the Queen, includes such names as the following : The Dukes of Westminster and Bedford, the Earl of Shaftesbury . . . Mr. ROBERT BROWNING. . . .—C.

1878. 'Belfast News-Letter,' Aug. 20, from the 'Pictorial World.' "Mr. Carlyle, the philosopher, and Mr. Browning, the poet, are said to be once more friends again, after their little falling-out of a year or two back." [This is pure myth.]
1879. 'Dublin Express,' 27 Jan. "Alfred Stanley Browning Tennyson ["Golden-haired Ally"], grandson of the poet, was christened on Saturday in Henry the Seventh's Chapel, Westminster Abbey. Dean Stanley, his godfather, presided, Mr. Robert Browning was also a sponsor, and Mrs. Richmond Thackeray Ritchie assisted."—C. Mrs. Ritchie is Thackeray's daughter. Browning dedicated *Red Cotton Night-Cap Country* to her.—F.
1879. 'Dublin Express,' June 16. "Action for Literary Libel. Common Pleas Division—London, Saturday . . . [Richard Herne] Shepherd v. Francis [publisher of 'The Athenæum']. This was an action to recover damages for alleged libels published of the plaintiff in the 'Athenæum,' for bringing out the 'Early Poems of Elizabeth Barrett Browning,' and 'Literary Revivals—Forgotten Books worth remembering.' Mr. Sergeant Parry, for the defence, called Mr. ROBERT BROWNING, who said that he 'objected altogether to the publication of these poems . . . (written by) . . . Mrs. Browning . . . when she was only 14 years old,' &c. Cross-examined about the 'Shelley Letters.' Browning 'in his preface, said that the forged letters were perfectly worthless; and nearly all the forty pages of the preface were devoted to the literary character of Shelley. The 'Letters' were withdrawn the moment they were found to be forgeries, and the book was now one of the rarest.'¹ 'Re-examined—Shelley, in his opinion, had written some of the greatest of English poems, and a sublime drama, as great as Shakspeare's. . . ' The further hearing of the case was adjourned."—C.
1879. 'The Times,' June 17. 1. Report of both days of the above trial. "The jury found a verdict for the plaintiff—damages £150." 2. A Leader on the subject.—C.
1879. 'Athenæum,' June 21. Review of Mr. Shepherd's 'Waltoniana,' with a tag commenting on his action against the Paper, and Mr. S.'s copying Browning's *Hervé Riel*, &c.
1879. "On March 12, 1879, Mr. Robert Browning accepted the post of President" [of the New Shakspeare Society]. Prospectus of the N. S. Soc. In the 'Daily News' of March 14 was a letter from a Correspondent announcing the fact, and quoting the passage from Prof. Spalding that is in the Browning Society's prospectus: "Accepting this view, there could be no hesitation as to the living poet whom the dead professor's words pointed to. Mr. Robert Browning was the Committee's choice, and on their appeal he willingly accepted as an honour the post he was asked to take. He is surely the right man in the right place."
1881. 'Journal of Education,' Feb. 1. Noticing Tennyson's dedication of his 'Ballads and other Poems' to his grandson Alfred, his son Lionel's eldest boy: "Golden-haired Ally, whose name is one with mine,
 Crazy with laughter and babble, and earth's new wine . . ."
- the writer says, "As an exact illustration of the second line, we may be pardoned for recalling a personal reminiscence. Mr. Browning was visiting the Poet Laureate at [Twickenham,] soon after the birth of his eldest son [Hallam], and, taking the boy from his father, who was not so well versed as he in handling infants, danced him up and down till the baby crowed with delight. 'Go on, Browning,' cried Mr. Tennyson, 'it's as good to the boy as a glass of champagne.'"—C.
- 1881 (?). A London Correspondent's Letter in a provincial paper. "The new Chinese Ambassador, a man of considerable literary ability, expressed a wish, shortly after his arrival in this country, of making the acquaintance of the principal English poets, and Mr. Browning was presented to him. The conversation turned to the compositions of the ambassador, who himself was a poet. 'What kind of poetry does his Excellency write,'—enquired Mr.

¹ See on this, 'Athenæum,' Oct. 5, 1872, p. 425; and the 'Dublin Mail,' Nov. 9, 1874 (from the 'Athenæum'), on B. W. Proctor's copy of the 'Letters' given him by Browning.—C.

Browning, 'Pastoral, humorous, lyric, or what?' There was a pause for a short time. At length the interpreter said that his Excellency thought his poetry would be better described as the 'enigmatic.'—'Surely,' replied Mr. Browning, 'there ought, then, to be the deepest sympathy between us, for that is just the criticism which is brought against my own works, and I believe it to be a just one.'"

NOTES.

p. 45. *The Pied Piper*. Its Story is taken from one of the famous *Familiar Letters*¹ of James Howell,—Section VI. Letter XLVII. To Mr. E. P. In the Index at the end, or "Extract of the choicest matters that go interwoven 'mongst these Letters," the following is cald "Of a miraculous accident happened in *Hamelen* in *Germany*."

"Sir,

"I saw such prodigious things daily don these few yeers, that I had resolv'd with my self to give over *wondering* at any thing; yet a passage happen'd this week, that forc'd me to wonder once more, because it is without parallell. It was, that som odd fellows went skulking up and down *London*-streets, and with Figs and Reasons allur'd little children, and so pourloyn'd them away from their parents, and carried them a Ship-board for beyond Sea, wher, by cutting their hair, and other divises, they so disguis'd them, that their parents could not know them.

"This made me think upon that miraculous passage in *Hamelen*, a Town in *Germany*, which I hop'd to have pass'd through when I was in *Hamburg*, had we return'd by *Holland*; which was thus, (nor would I relate it unto you, were not there som ground of truth for it). The said Town of *Hamelen* was annoyed with Rats and Mice; and it chanc'd, that a Pied-coated Piper came thither, who covenanted with the chief Burgers for such a reward, if he could free them quite from the said Vermin, nor would he demand it, till a twelvemonth, and a day after: The agreement being made, he began to play on his Pipes, and all the Rats, and the Mice, followed him to a great Lough hard by, where they all perish'd; so the Town was infested no more. At the end of the yeer, the Pied Piper return'd for his reward, the Burgers put him off with slightings, and neglect, offering him som small matter, which he refusing, and staying som dayes in the Town, one Sunday morning at High-Masse, when most people were at Church, he fell to play on his Pipes, and all the children up and down, follow'd him out of the Town, to a great Hill not far off, which rent in two, and open'd, and let him and the children in, and so clos'd up again: This happen'd a matter of two hundred and fifty yeers since [A.D. 1643 — 250 = 1393 A.D.²]; and in that Town, they date their Bills and Bonds, and other Instruments in Law, to this day from the yeer of the going out of their children: Besides, ther is a great pillar of stone at the foot of the said Hill, wheron this story is engraven.³

"No more now, for this is enough in conscience for one time: So I am

[Fleet, 1 Oct. 1643.]

"Your most affectionate servitor, J. H."

¹ *Epistolæ Ho-Elizianæ*. Familiar LETTERS Domestic and Forren; Divided into Six Sections, Partly *Historicall*, *Politically*, *Philosophically*, Upon Emergent Occasions: By J. H. Esq.;: One of the Clerks of His Majesties most Honourable Privy Councill. *London*, Printed for *Humphrey Moseley*; and are to be sold at his shop at the Prince's Arms in *S. Paul's Churchyard*, 1645.

² This is the year in which Chaucer, out in the cold at Greenwich, most likely wrote his *Envoy* to Scogan then in the sun of Court-favour at Windsor. If Chaucer had but heard the story, how he would have liked to try his hand at it!

³ See M. Merimée's first chapter of his '*Chronique sous Charles I*, where the story is also told.'—*L. Etienne*.

p. 45. *Cristina*. This, says wrongly Mr. T. Powell, in his 'Living Authors of England,' was meant for a young man who fell in love with Queen Victoria. The queen intended was Cristina of Spain: the young man was or went mad.—There is an account of Mr. Alfred Domett in Mr. Powell's book, and in the 'Biograph,' 1881.

p. 46. *The Blot in the 'Scutcheon'* was playd at Sadlers Wells in 1848.—T. Powell's 'Living Authors of England,' New York, 1849, p. 74 (or 'Pictures of Living Authors of Britain,' London, 1851, p. 64). In the American edition are several letters of Mrs. Browning's, p. 146-152. One before her marriage says, "Mr. Browning, with whom I have had some correspondence lately, is full of great intentions; the light of the future is on his forehead . . . I have a full faith in him as poet and prophet" (p. 147). *The Blot* was written in 5 days.

p. 66, note 3. The note in no way expresses the full scope of the poem.

p. 76. This Moxon 'Selections' came out in six-penny numbers, of 24 pages each.

p. 93. The vernacular is Father Prout's fun. Browning's version is in *Dramatic Lyrics*, Second Series, page 68:

"Studiando le mie cifre col compasso,
Rilevo che sarò presto sotterra,
Perchè del mio saper si fa gran chiasso,
E gl'ignoranti m'hanno mosso guerra."

"Said to have been found in a well at Abano in the last century. They were extemporaneously Englished thus: not as Father Prout chose to prefer them:

"Studying my ciphers with the compass,
I reckon—I soon shall be below-ground;
Because, of my lore folks make great rumpus,
And war on myself makes each dull rogue round."

1880. *Dramatic Lyrics*. Second Series, p. 67, 68, notes.

p. 101. 'Monodrama' was used by Charles Lamb in 1823, *Elia*, Ser. II, No. 5, p. 268 (ed. 1865); by Carlyle in 1831, *Sartor*, p. 75, ed. 1858; and in the *Eclectic Review*, 1849, p. 211: "The poet's [R. B.'s] genius is essentially dramatic, but not in the sense which the word vulgarly bears. Mr. Browning's is mostly the drama of character, not of incident, or scenic effect. Under this aspect, the entire sum of his poetry may be said to be dramatic, though much of it, like so much of Tennyson's, [is] simple *monodrama*; in which class must be included not only the lyrics, but the entire poem of *Paracelsus*."

1853 or -4. When Mr. Moncure D. Conway was a student at Harvard, there was a very successful performance of *Colombe's Birthday* at the Harvard Athenæum in Boston, Mass., U.S.A. Miss Davenport chose the play for her benefit, and Mr. Conway and other students got all their friends to take tickets. Among others, Longfellow and his wife—a great Browningite—were induced to come. Miss Davenport acted admirably; so did the performer of Valence; and in the acting, no difficulty whatever was felt in following the poet's meaning. Mr. Conway says he was an early reviewer of Browning in America, probably in the 'New York Tribune' or 'Evening Post.' He reviewed the *Dramatis Personæ* in the extinct 'Morning Star' newspaper here in 1864, and soon after wrote a long article in the 'Victoria Magazine' (see above) on all Browning's Works up to 1864. He will preach on *Sordello* at South Place Chapel, E.C., on Dec. 4, 1881.

Here is the pretty poem on Mrs. Browning's death, by Mr. James Thomson of our Society's Committee, mentioned on p. 57, note ², above :—

E. B. B.

1861.

I.

The white-rose garland at her feet,
The crown of laurel at her head,
Her noble life on earth complete,
Lay her in the last low bed
For the slumber calm and deep.
"He giveth His belovèd sleep."

II.

Soldiers find their fittest grave
In the field wheron they died ;
So her spirit pure and brave
Leaves the clay it glorified
To the land for which she fought
With such grand impassioned thought.

III.

Keats and Shelley sleep at Rome,
She in well-loved Tuscan earth ;
Finding all their death's long home
Far from their old home of birth :
Italy, you hold in trust
Very sacred English dust.

IV.

Wherefore this one prayer I breathe,—
That you yet may worthy prove
Of the heirlooms they bequeath
Who have loved you with such love :
Fairest land, while land of slaves,¹
Yields their free souls no fit graves.

The City of Dreadful Night and Other Poems, by James Thomson ("B. V.").
London. Reeves and Turner, 1880, p. 154-5.

¹ Rome was then still Papal. The folk were also slaves to Papal superstition, &c.

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1888. J. T. Nettlehip, *Stanzas to Browning*, p. 11.

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- The Society's Meetings and Papers, Session II., 1882-3, are, at 8 p.m., on Friday,
Oct. 27, 1882. "On Conscience and Art in Browning," by the Rev. Prof. F. JOHNSON, M.A. (Printed in *Papers*, Pt III.)
Nov. 24, 1882. (1) "What is *The Flight of the Duchess*," by Mrs. OWEN.
(2) On the Songs in *Pippa Passes*, by the Rev. J. SHARPE, M.A.
Jan. 26, 1883. "On Browning's Delineation of Female Character," by W. G. MARTLEY, Balliol College, Oxford.
Feb. 23, 1883. "On Browning's Intuition, specially in regard of Music and the Plastic Arts," by J. T. NETTLESHIP, Esq.
March 23, 1883. "Browning's Poems on God and Immortality, as bearing upon Life here," by W. F. REVELL, Esq.
April 27, 1883. "On Browning's Villains," by a Non-Member.
May 25, 1883. "On *James Lee's Wife*," by the Rev. H. J. BULKELEY, M.A.
June 22, 1883. "Browning considered in relation to his Time," by Cyril L. JOHNSON, Jesus College, Cambridge.
June 29, 1883. Browning Readings, Recitations, and Music.
July 6, 1883. Annual Meeting.

Other Papers are preparing by MISS ARTHUR, HUME C. FISSENT, M.A.,
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1881-4.

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The Browning Society's Papers, Part III.

The Society's "Illustrations to Browning's Poems," Part I.
[three Photographs, with an Essay by Ernest Radford.]

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The Browning Society

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BROWNING BIBLIOGRAPHY.

ADDITIONS, 31 DECEMBER 1881.

1. BROWNING'S ACTED PLAYS.
2. FRESH ENTRIES OF CRITICISMS ON BROWNING'S WORKS.
3. FRESH PERSONAL NOTICES OF BROWNING.
4. NOTES ON BROWNING'S POEMS AND MY BIBLIOGRAPHY.
5. SHORT INDEX.

1. BROWNING'S ACTED PLAYS.

1837. 'Gentleman's Magazine,' June. Covent Garden, May 1. *Strafford*, a tragedy, was acted by Mr. Macready on his benefit night. It is written by Mr. Browning, already known as author of a dramatic poem called *Paracelsus*. May 16. A species of Melodrame, in three acts, called *Walter Tyrrell*, was produced. . . . —W. G. S.

1837. 'Literary Gazette,' Saturday, May 6, p. 292, col. 1. Covent Garden. Having delivered our opinion upon the published play of *Strafford* (p. 283-4 of the same No.), we have here only to speak of the acting. That of Macready was most forcible and striking. *Strafford* is deeply agitated from first to last; and nobly and naturally did this accomplished performer embody the character throughout. The bursts of feelings were inimitably fine. Miss Faucit, also, played with great taste and effect. *Pym*, in Vandenhoff's hands, was rather croaky; but there is a sort of sameness in what he has to say and do, which, perhaps, led to this result. Mr. Bennett, and Webster junior, did well for *Hollis* and *Vane*. The *King*, Dale, was awfully bad; the *Queen*, Vincent, only a shade better. It is not in her pretty coquettish line.

1837. 'The Examiner,' Sunday, May 14. "*Strafford* was winning its way into even greater success than we had ventured to hope for it; but Mr. Vandenhoff's secession from the theatre has caused its temporary withdrawal. It will be only temporary, we trust; no less in justice to the great genius of the author, than to the fervid applause with which its last performance was received by an admirably filled house.

"Miss Faucit plays *Imogen* on Thursday next, when the *Winter's Tale* will be produced for her benefit. The deep and touching feeling of her *Carlisle* in the tragedy of *Strafford* has given us the warmest hopes of her success in that exquisite character. We have observed of late a great and gratifying improvement in this young lady's performance."

As John Forster had a right to speak on the character of *Strafford*, and what he'd have had *Strafford* on the stage to be, I print the whole of his criticism on Browning's drama and the performance of it at Covent Garden on Monday, May 1, 1837, from the 'Examiner' of May 7, 1837, p. 294-5. "*Strafford*: an Historical Tragedy. By Robert Browning. This is the work of a writer who is capable of achieving the highest objects and triumphs of dramatic literature. They are not achieved here; but here they lie, 'in the rough,' before every reader. *Strafford* suggests the most brilliant career of dramatic authorship that has been known in our time. We are not sure that it will be realized, because we should have predicted the same, some five and twenty years ago, of the author of *Inez de Castro* and *Ippolito d'Este* (Walter Savage Landor); but we are not without reasons for strong hope, since we were the first to hazard a prediction on the publication of *Paracelsus*, which has already been fulfilled,—being then doubtful whether that great poem was the work of mature age or of extreme youth, whereas now we know the latter supposition to be true.

"We will at once say in what we think the error of the tragedy of *Stafford* consists. The author has suffered himself to yield too much to the impulses of the pure poetical temperament in delineating the character of *Stafford*. He has gone too subtly beneath the broad masses of light and shade which hang over the history of that great and unfortunate man. Nothing could have been conceived finer or more effective than this mode of treatment, if Mr. Browning had designed to throw the interest of his tragedy upon the domestic life of *Stafford*. But this is not his design. The *Stafford* of Mr. Browning's work is the man whose crimes against the rising liberties of England were adjudged, by the greatest and most virtuous statesmen that have ever adorned her annals, expiable by nothing less than death,—and therefore we hold that in a tragedy, where the author places the popular cause in the very front of all our sympathies, the criminality of *Stafford* should have been made equally prominent with his grandeur. The catastrophe should have been the triumph of patriotism over the antagonist principle of tyranny; and this we do not feel as it (B.'s tragedy) stands. We have heard of *Stafford's* acts of violence, but have not seen them in the man. We have seen weakness only, in the infirmity of his devotion to a contemptible king, obscuring a nature which is just and noble; and his fall awakens in us rather that deep and subdued emotion which his sublime resignation to an inevitable fate calls forth, than the pity and terror which might have been made to impend over his scaffold, as the awful lesson of a Nation's Retribution. Let it not be supposed that, in the treatment we hint at, we would have had the more human qualities of *Stafford* kept utterly out of sight; no one less deserves such injustice than he;—we complain only, as it is, that they are the prominent features of the character, when they should rather have seemed as the 'dew drops on the lion's mane,'—as a few abrupt and rapid gleams of light, gilding the edges of a mass of dark and fearful passion.

"Having stated this objection with all the candour that is due to a man of Mr. Browning's genius, we will now say that a more thoroughly dramatic style than that in which Mr. Br. has worked out his own conception of *Stafford*, could not possibly be conceived; that that conception is finished, *ad unguem*, with unexampled delicacy and precision; and that it is this which causes us to regret that the same extraordinary powers had not been devoted to such a massive handling of the subject, as would have taken deeper and more lasting hold upon the audience of a theatre than it is possible to hope for in the present instance. It seems to us also that nothing could be more masterly than Mr. Br.'s sketches of the leaders of the independent party, though they are sketches only. *Pym* and the younger *Vane* are wonderfully exact delineations. The very faces of the men are before us as we read; we see the intense and settled features of the one, and the changeful flush and excitement of the other; their words are the expression, and not the description, of their passions; nay a word will often serve, with either, to paint a scene, and throw us back upon the youth of *Pym*, or forward into the maturity of *Vane*; while we never for an instant lose sight of the marked distinction which,—with a force and subtlety similar in kind to that with which Shakspeare always distinguishes those of his characters which even approach the nearest to each other,—Mr. Br. has preserved between these great leaders of the people. The same fire burns in the breasts of both; but in the one it is sullen heat of the furnace, and in the other the sparkling vivacity of the flame.

"The tragedy opens, immediately upon the arrival of *Lord Wentworth* in London to assist *Charles* in putting down the Scots' League and Covenant, with a meeting of the chiefs of the popular party—'a stealthy gathering of great-hearted men'—in an 'obscure small room' near Whitehall. As an opening scene this is probably pitched too high; but the style of the writing, in a dramatic sense, is absolutely perfect. It is the very 'stuff of which our life is made.' The fiery eloquence of passion with which we hear *Vane* throwing off the restraint imposed by *Hampden* and *Hollis*—the echo-less sound with which the voices of the weaker men of the party seem to chime in with his—the striking entrance of *Pym*, and the momentary still it throws over that troubled sea—'Now speak, *Vane*! Rudyard, you had much to say'—and the effect of *Pym's* startling announcement of his faith in *Wentworth* moving once more the

angry waters—all strike upon the mind of the reader in, as it were, distinct and tangible collision, and with a local truth and freshness, that we have never felt to the same extent in any scene or drama we are acquainted with.

“(p. 295.) In the second scene of the tragedy there is a meeting between *Wentworth* and *Pym*, in which the latter, probing *Wentworth* to the soul with the mention of certain indignities that had been offered to him by the *King*, seizes the occasion of the escape from *Wentworth's* lips of something like a memory of the past, to strive to win him back to the Old Cause again. This meeting is managed with singular subtlety and power, and closes in a noble burst of impassioned feeling. The scene with the *King* which succeeds to this, is quite unworthy of the scene that has gone before it. Here what we conceive to be the error of Mr. Browning's conception of *Strafford* is sensibly felt. A king without a single claim to rescue him from contempt, and a minister whose overruling passion is that of devotion to such a king,—present no front of opposition to the great hearts ranged on the popular side, in the issue of which we can feel anything like a strong sympathy or interest. Yet even here, and also in the scene of the second act, which is finer though dashed by the same essential error,—the style of the writing we hold to be, *quasi* the feeling sought to be expressed, perfectly lifelike and dramatic. It is not sustained, continuous, massive,—only because the feeling is none of them. The music of true language answers unerringly to the music of the mind; and it is the fault of conception, not of treatment, in these scenes, that *Strafford* is presented rather as the victim of an extreme and somewhat effeminate sensibility, than as the fearless and heroic champion of arbitrary power. Look at it in this view, and the sudden transitions and elliptical expressions, the eager haste with which thoughts interrupt each other, the anxious pauses, the fond repetitions,—all have their significancy, and point, as with an exactest index, to the depths and shallows of *Strafford's* mind. Too little colour, probably, may have been used here and there; but the precision of outline (waving as the outline is) and the marking of character are beyond all praise.

“The third act is the most masterly of the whole in construction; for here is legitimate action, real and sensible dramatic action, which we have not yet felt. *Strafford's* first scene, too, is quite as finely written as the first scene of the tragedy, and forces us to regret the inequality of his language—its feeble and desultory management—in the closing scene, when he staggers out of the House of Lords. This last fault we cannot help attributing to the same cause in the author, as leaves in the audience an exhausted and unsatisfied feeling here and elsewhere in the play, to the want of having placed sufficiently before him the high crimes for which judgment fell on *Strafford*. He did not suffer because the Scots' expedition failed, but because he had trampled on the laws, and betrayed the liberties, of England. Hence, too, the trial,—that grandest spectacle save one, of ancient or modern time,—that most solemn arbitration of an issue between the antagonist principles of liberty and despotism, in which every man that took a part either rose or fell as one or other of these principles was established or withdrawn,—that scene which Massinger would have written the whole five acts for the mere purpose of writing,—is, in consequence of Mr. Browning's plan, necessarily not given.

“The tragedy was produced at Covent Garden on Monday last, on the occasion of Mr. Macready's benefit, and with all the evidences of a decided success; though we confess, for the reasons we have stated, that we do not think it will take permanent hold of the stage. It should be stated, however, that it was most infamously got up; that even Mr. Macready himself was not near so fine as he is wont to be; and that for the rest of the performers, with the exception of Miss Faucit, they were a barn wonder to look at! Mr. Vandenhoff was positively nauseous, with his whining, drawing, and slouching, in *Pym*; and Mr. Webster whimpered in somewhat too juvenile a fashion through *Young Vane*. Some one should have stepped out of the pit, and thrust Mr. Dale from the stage. Anything should have been done, rather than that such exhibitions should be allowed to disgrace the stage of a 'national' theatre.

“The most striking thing of the evening was Mr. Macready's first entrance upon the stage. It was the portrait of the great and ill-fated Earl, stepping

from the living canvas of Vandyke ! The same fixed look, the same severity, the same mournful anxiety, the same eye and brow, the same deep and dauntless resolution, mingled with quiet sweetness, in the mouth ! The management of the hair, cut short and thick from the ample forehead, completed the marvellous resemblance. And let us add that where this great actor showed himself most worthy of his powers, was in those passages which approached most nearly to what we think the finest dramatic conception of the *Earl* . . ."

1843. 'Literary Gazette,' Feb. 18, p. 107-8. Drury Lane. On Saturday a "tragic play" in three acts, by Mr. Robert Browning, the author of *Paracelsus*, was produced here, and with doubtful success, though the audience in general certainly went along with the author. And, indeed, it would have been difficult not (p. 108) to do so; for, albeit some of the scenes and much of the dialogue are too long, there is a sufficient variety and constant moving in the action, which keeps the mind engaged, and prevents it from detecting and dwelling upon the faultiness of the plot . . . Allowing Mr. Browning his grounds, we are bound to say that there are fine marks of genius in the working-out of his conception, and not a few beautiful touches of genuine pathos and poetry—half-lines worth a world of declamation . . . (the) play (is) in poetical composition far above the mediocrity of our ordinary writers. But its inherent faults are fatal . . . Miss H. Faucit performed the part [of Mildred] tenderly and sweetly; and the scene when she sinks senseless to the ground on her brother's reproaches was very effective. Mr. Phelps was unequal. He has too much of violence to deliver, and it occasionally degenerated into rant and hair-tearing. But some portions were excellently done. Anderson was judicious and effective . . . At the end, the applause greatly predominated; but still we cannot promise the *Blot* that it will not soon be wiped off the stage.¹

1848. *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon'*.² 'The Examiner,' Feb. 18, p. 101. DRURY LANE. "Mr. Browning—a writer whose career we watch with great interest, because we believe him to be a man of genius and a true poet—is the author of a tragedy in three acts, produced at this theatre, on Saturday last, and entitled *A Blot on the 'Scutcheon'*. In performance it was successful: a result which it had been hardly safe to predict of a work of so much rare beauty, and of such decisive originality.

"There are qualities that seldom, at first starting, make their way in the world, more especially the world theatrical. And we are not sanguine of the chances of continued patronage to the *Blot in the 'Scutcheon'*. People are already finding out, we see, that there is a great deal that is equivocal in its sentiment, a vast quantity of mere artifice in its situations, and in its general composition not much to 'touch humanity.' We do not pretend to know what should touch humanity, beyond that which touches our own hearts, but we would give little for the feelings of a man who could read this tragedy without a deep emotion. It is very sad; painfully and perhaps needlessly so; but it is unutterably tender, passionate, and true. It is not copied from this or that existing notion; it is not moulded on this or the other of the old authors; it is the growth of the writer's heart, and has the distinct truth, the animated pathos, the freshness and unexaggerated strength, which spring in that soil alone.

"We seldom describe the plots of plays. The interest here turns on the shame which is brought upon an old English family, and the vengeance it provokes; upon the suffering which sin engenders, and which death only ends. There is a deeper moral for those who can see deeper truths than the conventional ones. At the opening of the first act, the hand of *Mildred Tresham* is sought by *Henry Earl of Mertoun*, but before the act closes, the honour of *Mildred* has

¹ It may be convenient here to notice that Mr. Br. is publishing from time to time a series of poetical and dramatic compositions, under the quaint title of *Bells and Pomegranates* (London: E. Moxon), in which there is much to admire as well as to question; just as in this play . . .

² See *Charles Dickens's* enthusiastic praise of this Tragedy, p. 126 below, under the year 1842.

been brought into question in the presence of her proud and sensitive brother, the *Lord of Tresham*, the passionate, impetuous, high-hearted, self-willed *Thorold*. In the second act, Mildred's shame is disclosed, but she dares not couple it with her lover's name. At the opening of the third act, *Thorold* learns it, but nothing gives pause to his savage instinct of revenge, till he sees bleeding beneath his sword, the author of his sister's shame, and the only creature who could have saved, and who had earnestly striven to save, the house's honour. It is the young *Earl of Mertoun*. The sister dies of a broken heart, and *Thorold* takes poison.

"To all this it is objected, that, as a matter of course, the lover's name should have been surrendered, and all further evil put an end to on the instant. We know of few tragedies that would stand this sort of criticism. As if it were not at the very root of the feeling on which the whole is based, that the poor shame-crushed girl should be silent with a thousand fears, where the ruder nature would at once have spoken. 'Courtly Mildred dies, when country Madge survives.' And did not the issue justify her fears? It is objected, too, that if *Thorold* repents his rage when his victim has fallen under it, there is no reason that he should not have repented before, and time enough to end matters amicably. A wise and satisfactory suggestion, that proves the needlessness of how much sorrow, real and theatrical. Oh! that both worlds would but take it to heart, and always repent before it is too late!

"There are defects in the tragedy, though these are not of them. . . There is no defect that calls for instant exposure. There is no equivocal morality in it, no false sympathies to set the judgment halting between right and wrong; no good that deters, no bad that encourages. It is full of manly tenderness which remains in the heart when the guilt and sadness are forgotten. And though there are causes in the subject itself—and most of all, 'the pity of it'—which may for the present give it short existence on the stage, it is a work, we are very sure, that will not be willingly let die. Of the performance we have little to say, but that we think it on the whole under-acted. The character best sustained was that of Miss Helen Faucit." (On Feb. 24, Macready revived 'Much Ado,' and Milton's 'Comus' for his benefit.)

1848. *The Blot in the 'Scutcheon'*: its Revival by Phelps on Monday, Nov. 27, 1848. (From the 'Athenæum' of Saturday, Dec. 2, 1848.) SADLER'S WELLS.—The re-production of Mr. Browning's fine drama *The Blot in the 'Scutcheon'*, was on Monday an exciting incident to the admirers of this gentleman's genius. The play is an attempt to give a poetic interest to a melo-dramatic subject. . . The experiment perfectly succeeded. The play, as now acted, commanded well-deserved applause; though we believe its interest to be of too painful a sort to permit its having a long run. The chief merit of the piece lies in the second act; where *Thorold, Lord Tresham* (Mr. Phelps), seated in his library, listens to the disclosure made by his faithful domestic, old *Gerard* (Mr. Graham), that his only sister, *Mildred Tresham* (Miss Cooper), has given access at night to a stranger. Hereupon, the young nobleman sends for his sister; and after impressing her with the sense of a brother's love, and the importance of the fact that the honour of the house depends on them, the sole survivors of the family,¹—he first darkly and hesitatingly hints at, and at last plainly and decidedly accuses her with, her transgression. Great are his wonder and indignation to hear her confess it,—yet declare her willingness to wed his friend *Henry, Earl Mertoun* (Mr. Dickinson). Mad with anger, he calls his friends into the chamber, curses Mildred in their presence, and thus leaves her. Her cousin, *Guendolin Tresham* (Miss Huldart), suspects a mystery; and soon learns, by woman's instinct, that the favoured lover and the expected bridegroom are the same person. Meantime, the wrathful brother has come upon the spot where the Earl has been accustomed to gain furtive entrance to his mistress's apartment; and there finding the betrayer of his sister's honour, drags him forward, and, without allowing explanation, mortally wounds him. Mildred's death and his own follow, as the culminating sequel of this rash deed. Mr. Phelps's acting in *Lord Thorold* was of such excellence as to deserve

¹ The writer forgets *Thorold Tresham's* brother *Austin*.

especial analysis. The whole of the library scene in particular was admirable. The uneasy, irritable, suppressed feeling—the doubt—the conviction—the tenderness—the irascibility—the overwhelming wrath—the maddening indignation—the fearful curse,—these altogether composed a situation of rare power and effectiveness. In the parts of the frail boy and girl, neither Mr. Dickinson nor Miss Cooper had enough of poetic perception to do justice to the sentiment . . . Hers, accordingly, was a literal reading,—not an interpretation of the part. Mr. Dickinson, on the other hand, was frequently too violent, and committed again the indiscretions which we have already charged against him. The vehemence of his attachment excited no little laughter in the pit. With these drawbacks, the piece was both excellently mounted and well acted; giving satisfaction to a numerous though not overflowing audience. [On Wednesday, Dec. 13, 1848, Shakspeare's and Fletcher's 'Henry VIII.' was revived at Sadler's Wells, Miss Glyn playing Q. Katharine.]

1848. 'Examiner,' Dec. 9. We ought not to have passed without mention last week a careful revival of Mr. Browning's poetical and passionate play of the *Blot* on the 'Scutcheon at SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE. Mr. Phelps played the hero with striking effect. Something too subdued, perhaps, in the early scenes, where passion overmasters reason; but when the tide of remorse flows grandly in, full of dignified pathos and true emotion. Mr. Dickinson, whom we formerly mentioned, was the hapless lover in the play, and showed a strong sense of the poetry in his part, as well as much eager fervour and delicacy of elocution, which augured well for the future of so young an actor. The scenery and general appointments were rich and tasteful. We could not desire to see better scenes anywhere than the opening hall of the mansion of the Treshams, with their shielded 'scutcheons "blushing" through countless quarterings; than the chamber of Mildred, or the study of Thorold; or than those dark old clusters of gloomy forest trees which witness at the last, and do their best to conceal, the family shame. Mr. Phelps comprehends the poetry of a play, and can seize and reproduce it in the arrangements of the scene.

1853. *Colombe's Birthday*, its production at the Haymarket for Helen Faucit (now Lady Martin), on Monday, April 25, 1853. (From 'The Athenæum,' Saturday, April 30, 1853.) HAYMARKET.—The production of Mr. Browning's *Colombe's Birthday* as an acting drama is, in a literary point of view, an incident of considerable interest. To our readers a detail of the plot is needless, and their estimate of the poem was long since formed. Miss Faucit seems to have chosen the character of the heroine as one which she deemed peculiarly fitted to make a favourite (? favourable) impression on her re-appearance before a London public. *Colombe*, the Duchess of Juliers and Cleves, is one of those delicate creations which the histrionic genius of this actress best delights to embody. We have in her, first of all, the undeveloped woman, made a state-puppet,—who, not of her own seeking, but for the interest and by the agency of others, is placed in a responsible position, on which the happiness of the many is dependent. She is a reigning Duchess,—but her right is liable to be questioned under the Salique law. It is accordingly questioned:—*Prince Berthold* puts in his claim, sanctioned by the European powers,—a man in the fair way of further becoming an emperor. The consequent situation of the Duchess excites even the compassion of her selfish and cowardly courtiers,—who foist upon a poor advocate of Cleves, *Valence* (Mr. Barry Sullivan), the fatal document containing Berthold's claims, which they tremble to present themselves. At this moment a sense of her responsibility in the office which she is summoned to surrender for the first time, is forced upon the Duchess. The advocate presents the wrongs and sufferings of Cleves in a petition;—wrong and sufferings of which, in the security of her power and happiness, she had not even dreamed. Gladly would the hitherto unsuspected burthen of office be at once laid down by the saddened lady; but then the wrongs and sufferings in question might be increased under the stern, manly despotism of Berthold. Cleves desires the sway of a tender and compassionate woman, well disposed to do right when the way is pointed out. Moved by these considerations, the beautiful, royally descended, and now patriotic Duchess, resolves to maintain the power which she has been permitted to usurp. But a new difficulty arises. Prince Berthold

is generous to the point of chivalry ; aware of the virtues of the lady, he is willing to sink his territorial claims,—and, by the offer of his lands, invests her with the possibility of becoming an empress. Here all difficulty would end. It is an honourable compromise, which Colombe would not have been indisposed to accept :—but a few hours have changed the character of her feelings and the destiny of her life. Valence has resisted the pusillanimity of the court,—stood by her when all were falling away,—become her “counsellor, guide, philosopher and friend” :—she discovers that he loves her ; discovers, too, that she loves him. A mental struggle—a moral conflict—takes place in both. The beautiful scene in the fourth act expressive of this was as beautifully interpreted by Miss Faucit. At the end, the Duchess finds herself in a metaphysical dilemma. What she had taken for loyalty and patriotism in Valence, was, then, love ! Strange, that nothing should be what it calls itself ! For *those* qualities, she had admired him,—not for *this*. This solution of the problem stands over for the fifth act. The heart decides it. Generous as Berthold proves himself to be, he does not love the Duchess,—at least, not as now she has come to understand the passion :—Valence does. Therefore, for Valence she resigns her duchy to the Prince, who, admiring her conduct, confesses the completeness of the triumph of love, though in his own rough but honest nature he finds little, as he acknowledges, to enable him satisfactorily to understand it. Thus ends the play. Such is the refined action of this charming poem, rather than drama. Its movements, for the most part, occur in the chambers of the mind. Such themes are evidently not of the usual stage-sort, and will fail of attraction to all who insist on the ordinary dramatic motion and action. To the worn-out and wearied playgoer, who can turn for a moment out of the beaten path, *nothing could well be more delicious. The involuntary tear was often felt upon the cheek.* We feared that on performance, this fine poem would scarcely be intelligible to a mixed audience. Miss Faucit, however, by her skill, made them perfectly understand it ; and the applause came in the proper places. That the performance will become popular, it is not for the critic to determine,—but *we can record its apparent perfect success on the first night.* Whether the taste of the public for so refined a creation on the stage is yet formed, remains to be seen. [On Saturday, May 14, 1853, a new three-act comedy . . . from the pen of the Rev. Mr. Whyte . . . & . . . entitled ‘The Mouse-Trap,’ was brought out at the Haymarket.]

On the performance of *Colombe's Birthday* at the Haymarket on Monday, April 25, 1853, the ‘Examiner’ of Saturday, April 30, winds up its review, by—“The applause was unmixed at the close of the play, and many passages as it proceeded had excited evident admiration and sympathy. If it remains on the stage longer than we have ventured to anticipate, we shall think all the better of the audiences of the Haymarket. Nor, if the great beauty of the contrast between the characters of Berthold and Valence, could only have been better exhibited by the actors, should we have entertained so much doubt as we do, of the probability of such a result.” (I find no note of the play's discontinuance, but believe it was played for a fortnight till the Haymarket closed.)

1853. ‘Literary Gazette,’ April 30, p. 435. The production at the Haymarket, on Monday, of Mr. Browning's fine drama of *Colombe's Birthday*, was an interesting experiment upon the state of the public taste, and speaks well for the determination of Mr. Buckstone to illustrate the higher drama, so far as the means within his reach will admit. . . . *Colombe's Birthday* was well known to those who had studied it, to possess true dramatic interest, while it was rich, both in poetical elements and in characters drawn with masterly lines, and worthy the illustration of high histrionic powers. Without violent passions or exciting situations, the story has a strong human interest, and affords scope for the display of a great variety of character, and the development of deep emotion quite sufficient to enchain the attention and elicit the sympathies of all whose thoughts and feelings are not merely superficial. [The story is then told. Valence's scene with Colombe in Act IV is called one “which, for beauty of conception and treatment, has not been surpassed by any modern dramatist ;” &c.]. The story is handled throughout with a freshness and originality of manner, equally confounding to the “fast” and the conventional school of

critics, but which produced a marked result, in the close and fascinated attention of the audience. Much has been said about the obscurity of the language, and the metaphysical character of the thoughts; but this is the mere cant of those who have neither read the play nor given it careful attention in the theatre. The story is clear, the language is clear, the emotions are simple and direct, the ideas rise naturally out of the circumstances. Commonplace they certainly are not, and the old sing-song of sounding phraseology has been carefully avoided. There are no fillings-up of lines with sound. Nothing is said without a purpose, and things are often so tersely said, that unless the actor has fully mastered the poet's meaning, he must fail of conveying it to the audience. If the drama does not succeed upon the stage, it is from no fault in itself, but partly from want of power in the actors, partly from want of appreciation by the critics whose duty it is to attract the public to it, and who for the most part have not, it appears to us, done it justice. This is just one of those plays where the aid of the press is important as a guide to the public. There is nothing clap-trap about it, all being trusted to natural action, a poetical treatment, and the delineation of character. But instead of mastering its merits, and pointing attention to its abundant beauties, critics think they discharge their functions by sneering at a work, of which they plainly know nothing beyond what they have learned from a careless observation of it on the stage, as uninteresting, obscure, and unfit for representation. If unfitness there be, it lies in this, that the play demands performers of a higher stamp than are now upon the stage. *Prince Berthold*, *Valence*, *Sir Guibert* and *Melchior*, are all parts requiring actors of a calibre much higher than Mr. Howe, Mr. Sullivan, Mr. W. Farren, and Mr. Rogers. . . . Speeches which are full of broken emotion, and where a great actor would electrify the house, fall cold and meaningless from Mr. Sullivan's lips. . . . The *Colombe* of Miss Helen Faucit is a portraiture in which Mr. Browning's conception receives all the completeness and enrichment which a great actress is able to bestow. In the development of all the new world of feelings, which crowd upon her so suddenly and so rapidly in this her first great day of trial, that nice gradation is observed, which leaves at the close the impression of perfect reality. Through the finished delicacy of the details, the traces of great latent power are evident, which while they help to elevate our impression of the character of *Colombe*, increase our admiration of the powers of the actress who so skilfully subordinates her genius to perfect harmony with the poet's idea. Her clear and melodious enunciation of the dialogue and delicate phases of emotion seem to discover a force and beauty in the poem which is not elsewhere apparent. The *mise en scène* is admirable. The scenery and adjuncts have been skilfully selected, and are executed in the best style.

1853 or —4. *Colombe's Birthday* at Boston, Massachusetts, U.S.A. Mr. Moncure D. Conway, in his valuable article on "Robert Browning" (the *Works* of 1863, 3 vols) in the 'Victoria Magazine,' Feb. 1, 1864, says that B. "is one of that class of writers whose finest thoughts must be often read 'between the lines.' He supposes his reader to have in his mind a scene or action to which his sentences are footlights" (p. 304). And in proof of this, Mr. Conway cites (p. 305) from *Colombe's Birthday*, part of the scene between the Duchess and Valence, when the latter takes her, Berthold's, proposal of love, and she questions him, Valence, as to his own love.—Act IV, *Works*, 1863, ii. :—

"The Duchess. You reason, then, and doubt.

Valence.

I love and know.

[to]

The Duchess. When you poured out Cleves' wrongs impetuously,
Was she [V's own love] in your mind?

Valence.

All was done for her

—To humble me!"

(p. 306) 'I remember well to have seen¹ a vast miscellaneous crowd in an American theatre hanging with breathless attention upon every word of this

¹ See above, p. 114.

interview, down to the splendid climax where, in obedience to the Duchess's direction to Valence how he should reveal his love to the lady she so little suspects to be herself, he kneels,—every heart evidently feeling each word as an electric touch, and all giving vent at last to their emotion in round after round of hearty applause. Indeed, during the entire performance I took occasion, at passages that might have been thought by some readers abstruse, to look around and see if I could discover a flickering intelligence in any face, but was convinced that the whole was thoroughly comprehended and felt by the entire audience. Undoubtedly this was due, to a great extent, to the genuine ability of the leading artists and the care with which they had studied the drama. Indeed the performance of *Colombe* by Miss Davenport was an excellent analysis of the play. In the line I have italicised

'*The D . . . Your first love, doubtless! Well, what's gone from me?*
What have I lost in you?'

her voice sank to the tone of plaintive bewilderment, it being spoken to herself; then it is raised as she turns directly to Valence, and says, "What have I lost in you?" When *Colombe* says that, whilst he poured out the wrongs of Cleves she "thought"—Valence is for the moment surprised into a forgetfulness of the secrecy of his love, and interrupts hastily,—“You thought of me?” Of course when he stood there before her as an advocate, she *must* have thought of him, and the mystification with which the artist referred to said:—“Of whom else?”—gave a thrilling intensity to those three words which many years cannot obliterate from my memory. When the thought comes over her like a shadow, that the very devotion with which he had pleaded the wrongs of Cleves, which had first enlisted her admiration, might have been inspired by a less noble feeling, her chill is felt in a reversion from the woman to the Duchess: “This is idling: to our work!” The tender voice becomes hard, the bent neck (p. 307) of the eager inquiring *Colombe* is now erect to the stately height of the Duchess of Juliers. She is about to say that when the legal abdication in favour of the Prince has occurred, the marriage proposed may more suitably follow; when by an exquisite perception in the poet, the thought of marriage, even before it can find words, hurls her back upon that yet unrecognized feeling which is the deepest. And yet the harder tone of the Queen dominates over the woman's interest, in the severe and blunt question—whether she whom he loved was in his mind when he spoke of Cleves. Let the reader imagine the bitter sneer and averted face of *Colombe* as her hero sinks, and the flashing upon Valence of the thought that she has discovered his presumptuous love and is punishing it, coming between the first and last parts of his reply—between, “All was done for her,” and the moan, as from under an engine of torture, “To humble me!” and he will see how important it is to read ‘between the lines’ of this author.

2. FRESH ENTRIES OF CRITICISMS, ETC.

1833. 'Literary Gazette,' March 23, p. 183, col. 2. A four-line depreciatory notice of *Pauline*.
1833. [Allan Cunningham in the] 'Athenæum,' April 6, p. 216, col. 2, 3: reviews *Pauline*. There is not a little true poetry in this very little book, here and there we have a touch of the mysterious, which we cannot admire; and now and then a want of melody, which we can forgive; with perhaps more abruptness than is necessary: all that, however, is as a grain of sand in a cup of pure water, compared to the nature, passion, and fancy of the poem. We open the book at random; but fine things abound: there is no difficulty in finding passages to vindicate our praise [quotes "Autumn has come" to "the verse being as the mood it paints," *Works*, 68, i. 11-12]. Description and sentiment are everywhere beautifully mingled [quotes "Night, and one single ridge" to "joins its parent-river with a shout," *ib.* p. 29-31; including the longer of the two passages cited by Mr. Gosse in Scribner's 'Century,' Dec. 1881, p. 1981.

The poem is dated Richmond, Oct. 22, 1832; it bears no name, and carries the stamp of no poet with whose works we are intimate. We hope the author's next strains will be more cheerful, and as original as these: the day is past, we fear, for either fee or fame in the service of the muse; but to one who sings so naturally, poetry must be as easy as music is to a bird, and no doubt it has a solace all its own.

1833. 'Tait's Edinburgh Magazine,' No. 17, August, p. 668. "Besides the above poems, which are of recent publication, we have *Pauline, a Fragment of a Confession*; a piece of pure bewilderment." And this line of silly carelessness lost us John Stuart Mill's review of the poem!

1835. 'Athenæum,' Aug. 2, p. 640, col. 2. A ten-line notice of *Paracelsus*. "There is talent in this dramatic poem, (in which is attempted a picture of the mind of this celebrated character,) but it is dreamy and obscure."

1837. 'Literary Gazette,' May 6, p. 283-4: rev. *Strafford*. The poem of *Paracelsus* presented so many high poetical beauties, as to give its young author a strong hold upon the public attention, and teach it to expect much from any future production of his pen. He has now appeared in the more difficult and arduous character of a tragic dramatist; and so successfully, that we may truly say he has not disappointed the hopes his first work led us to entertain. There is much vigour in *Strafford*, and much genuine poetry, though Mr. Br. has rather sought to accomplish his aim by the impulses given to his *dramatis persona*, than by endowing them with the beauties of style and diction . . . the play is more one of rapid events than of studied poetical embellishment. The only part that seems to admit of the latter, is an imaginary one of Lucy Percy, whom the author has painted as devoted in love to the ill-fated *Strafford*. . . The dialogue is very abrupt and interrupted—the sentences broken and exclamatory, to a degree that often affects the sense. This was felt even more upon the stage than it is in the closet; and, as an acting play, the interest fails after the third act, when *Strafford* is overthrown. The fourth, in which he does not appear, lingers amid the plot for his destruction, and the vacillation of the King; and, though his prison scene is touching and sad, it insufficiently revives our sympathies for the prototype of royal martyrdom. Charles himself is drawn more weak and treacherous than even adverse history represents him; and only Pym, among the rest, stands out prominently and consistently on the canvas. . . Hampden, Savile, Ruyard, &c., are ciphers; and the Queen has not much either to say or do. Where *Strafford* is not, there is nothing to care for; and where he is, is turmoil from the beginning . . .

1842. Charles Dickens on *The Blot in the 'Scutcheon'*. This was the date, too, of Mr. Browning's tragedy of the *Blot on the 'Scutcheon'*, which I took upon myself, after reading it in the manuscript, privately to impart to Dickens, and I was not mistaken in the belief that it would profoundly touch him. 'Browning's play,' he wrote (25th of November), 'has thrown me into 'a perfect passion of sorrow. To say that there is anything in its subject 'save what is lovely, true, deeply affecting, full of the best emotion, the most 'earnest feeling, and the most true and tender source of interest, is to say 'that there is no light in the sun, and no heat in blood. It is full of genius, 'natural and great thoughts, profound and yet simple, and yet beautiful in its 'vigour. I know nothing that is so affecting, nothing in any book I have ever 'read, as Mildred's recurrence to that "I was so young—I had no mother."

[I was so young—I loved him so—I had
No mother—God forgot me—and I fell,]

'I know no love like it, no passion like it, no moulding of a splendid thing 'after its conception, like it. And I swear it is a tragedy that MUST be 'played: and must be played, moreover, by Macready. There are some things 'that I would have changed if I could (they are very slight, mostly broken 'lines); and I assuredly would have the old servant *begin his tale upon the 'scene*; and be taken by the throat, or drawn upon, by his master, in its com- 'mencement. But the tragedy I never shall forget, or less vividly remember 'than I do now. And if you tell Browning that I have seen it, tell him that 'I believe from my soul there is no man living (and not many dead) who could

'produce such a work.'—Macready likes the altered prologue very much.' . . . Forster's 'Life of Dickens,' vol. ii. (1873), p. 24-5.

1843. 'Gentleman's Magazine,' August, p. 168-9, reviews *Bells and Pomegranates*, Nos. I-IV. Of Mr. Browning's poetical powers and philosophical knowledge of the mind of man, we have a very high opinion, and on some of the eloquent and powerful passages in his former productions we have been delighted to dwell. His *Paracelsus* was a *noble monster* (!); but as regards the present work, we take it that Mr. Browning in poetry, as Mr. Turner in the sister art of painting, being self-delighted with the exercise of his acknowledged powers, writes for his own gratification and to his own will, without much regard to the approbation or applause of his readers. His mind is full of imagery, and all fancies quaint and noble; a copious flow of language is at his command; he is master of the passions that sway the human heart: and thus conscious of his powers, he mounts his steed, turns the magic peg in its ear, and instantly shoots aloft, and goes careering along in the high regions of the empyrean, hardly visible to ordinary mortals. Of his four numbers we like best his first, *Pippa Passes*. The scene between the wife Olivia [Ottima] and her paramour Sibald [Sebald] . . . is very poetically drawn; and so is the sketch of the Poor Girls who sit on the steps near the Duomo of S. Maria. . . . The dramatic lyrics are very clever in parts; but the following is perfect as a whole, as an excellent companion to the best of the spirited old political ballads and garlands, *Cavalier Tunes*.—*I. Marching Along* [all quoted]. The Cloister [Spanish] is the next best, in our belief, but we have not room to extract it. (Mr. W. G. Stone gives me the reference.)

1845. 'The Theologian: a Chronicle of Ancient and Modern Divinity, and Universal Christian Literature,' London, Ollivier, no. 6, vol. ii. p. 276-282. Review of *Paracelsus*, p. 278. Browning's *Paracelsus* is indeed one of the most remarkable,—one of the most poetically beautiful works, that has been added for many years to our stores of national literature. A profundity of thought is displayed in it, almost unrivalled in the poetic creations of our countrymen; whilst the imaginativeness, the picturesque fancy of the illustrative comparisons, the tenderness of loving depth of soul developed in the characters of the drama, form a whole that must at once challenge high admiration for its grandeur and nobility, and heartfelt sympathy with its gentler beauties . . . p. 279. The poetry in which the drama is embodied is of the very highest order: worthy indeed of its author, *for whom we scruple not to challenge admiration and acknowledgement, as the first poet of the day*. Let us give some proofs of the truth of the allegation. . . . Thus beautifully speaks Browning, in the poem of *Paracelsus*, of the influence of man's birth on creation.

"Man once descried, imprints for ever

His presence on all lifeless things" . . . (V. 720-739.)

. . . . p. 280. Or again, for a description of night verging towards morning, is it possible to surpass this? . . .

"Best ope the casement. See

The night, late strewn with clouds and flying stars,

Is blank and motionless. How peaceful sleep

The tree-tops all together! like an asp

The wind slips whispering from bough to bough." . . . (V. 997-1001.)

p. 281. Still, the highest merit of this poem remains almost untouched on. These will be found chiefly in that dramatic verisimilitude, that entering into the very heart and soul of man, which is Browning's special prerogative; that

¹ "He [Dickens] is a strong admirer of Tennyson and Browning; we have heard him declare that he would rather have written the *Blot in the Scutcheon* than any work of modern times."—T. Powell, 'Living Authors,' 1849, p. 175.

"All the incidents—as in *The Blot on the Scutcheon*, one of the most perfectly conceived and perfectly executed tragedies in the language—are grouped around the supreme crisis out of which they spring, and to which they are organically related. The tragedy may cover a life-time; but the one moment big with fate burns like a baneful star in the centre." 1865. Jno. Skelton. 'Campaigner at Home,' p. 277.

portraying of separate individualities which it is almost impossible to confound or miscomprehend. . . It is more particularly in the portraiture of gentle hearts and noble deeds that Browning excels . . . (p. 282). *Paracelsus* is a great poem, one that requires long and careful study for a full appreciation, but which contains many beauties that will strike the reader at the first glance. It is truly important . . . it confirms us in that belief . . . which *Paracelsus* here expresses, and which may be said to convey the very essence of Christianity, as establishing the superiority of spirit over mind,—

“Love, hope, fear, *faith*,—these make humanity!”

Intellect is subordinate to Conscience.

- 1845 (?). ‘Landor on R. Browning.’ “I have written to Browning, a great poet, a very great poet indeed, as the world will have to agree with us in thinking. I am now deep in the *Soul's Tragedy*. The sudden close of *Luria* is very grand; but preceding it, I fear there is rather too much of argumentation and reflection. It is continued too long after the Moor has taken poison. I may be wrong; but if it is so, you will see it and tell him. God grant that he may live to be much greater than he is, high as he stands above most of the living: *latis humeris et toto vertice*. But now to the *Soul's Tragedy*, &c. Adieu till we meet at this very table.”

1846. Easter. W. S. Landor to R. B. on his dedication of *Luria* and the *Soul's Tragedy* to L. (From S. Colvin's ‘Landor,’ 1881, p. 188. “Accept my thanks for the richest of Easter offerings made to any one for many years. I staid at home last evening on purpose to read *Luria*, and if I lost my good music (as I certainly did) I was well compensated in kind. To-day I intend to devote the rainy hours entirely to *The Soul's Tragedy*. I wonder whether I shall find it as excellent as *Luria*. You have conferred too high a distinction on me in your graceful inscription. I am more of a dramatist in prose than in poetry. . . . Go on and pass us poor devils! If you do not go far ahead of me, I will crack my whip at you and make you spring forward. So, to use a phrase of Queen Elizabeth,

“Yours as you demean yourself,

“W. LANDOR.”

1848. J. Russell Lowell on Browning's Humour. ‘His humour is as genuine as that of Carlyle, and if his laugh have not the “earthquake” character with which Emerson has so happily labelled the shaggy merriment of that Jean Paul Burns, yet it is always sincere and hearty, and there is a tone of meaning in it which always sets us thinking. Had we room, we should be glad to give our readers a full analysis of his *Soul's Tragedy*, which abounds in the truest humor, flitting from point to point with all the electric sparkle and condensed energy of wit.’ 1848. ‘North American Review,’ April, vol. 66, p. 394. p. 395: We copy one specimen of Mr. Browning's more formal, and so to speak, scholastic humor, *Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis*. (p. 397). We are confident that our readers will sympathize with us in the joy we feel, that one of those old bores in Quarto, whose oppressions we have all suffered in our several degrees, has met with an adequate retribution.’

1850. ‘Massachusetts Quarterly Review,’ No. XI. June, 1850. Art. IV. “Browning's Poems.” 1. *Poems*. In Two Vols. Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields. 1850. 2. *Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day*. London. 1850. . . ‘If we have nearly made up our mind that a metaphysical faculty, both keen and profound, is the writer's gift, we suspend our judgment when he gives us some of the most subtle developments of human character and motive that exist since Shakspeare. Lest we should decide in favor of this great trait of genius, he hurries us into the domain of nature, charms us by description at once delicate and sublime, brings the fleeting graces of earth and sky to match his thoughts, gives animals an individuality, from the quick jerboa, “none such as he for a wonder,” to the lion, thinking of his desert, with “the hope in those eyes wide and steady:” there is not a dead or living thing with which the poet has not the healthiest sympathy. He brings them all out, the shy birds, the dumb flowers, and encourages them to show their best side to us. . . We yield our admiration to *his pictures of still life*, and are on the point of calling him the artist of nature, when he gives his tube another turn. Were it not for the genial relations

which all his gifts bear to each other, we should say that another poet was demonstrating before us, with the power of vivid relation, the dramatic rendering of imaginary scenes into life and wonderful movement, with inevitable word-painting, with coloring and grouping that cheapen in our estimation the best pictures we can remember. Then he tosses us a lyric, with the rich "golden cry" of the trumpet, such as *Marching Along*, *Incident of the French Camp*, *The Lost Leader*. Then his clear voice rolls out the sly humor of *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, and one of the *Garden Fancies*. Then he breaks into a fierce scorn with *The Confessional*; recovers and consoles himself with (p. 348) the singing of *The Boy and the Angel*, and those two exquisite pieces, at once song and picture, *Meeting at Night*, and *Parting at Morning* . . . then he sings songs. . . Suddenly he grows very serious as he calls up the scenes of *Luria* to pass before you. . . As you become elevated and strengthened, he bids you look again; film after film passes over the magical mirror, each film a character or a life: the pure pathos of Mildred's lapse in *The Blot in the 'Scutcheon* . . . the naive and sweet prayerfulness of Pippa, God's unconscious singer . . . the endurance, the love of right, of Valence, rewarded by a doubling of all these in *Colombe* . . . the great lesson of the impulsive, ruined Paracelsus . . . his heart broken by its last throb, suggesting too late that Love should precede Power, that love itself was knowledge . . . the line will stretch out to the crack of doom . . . (p. 349) The characters are as substantial and probable as the landscapes; they are reproduced with all the vividness of thought and feeling belonging to a history . . . (p. 350) You long to know more about them, for their imagined acts and situations have won you completely, enlisting heart and soul in their behalf. . . The story related may be simple enough, but it is transfused with the life's blood of the actors . . . as in real life you are conscious of their reserved power and character. Chance touches reveal to you a world of feeling or passion, and a couple of lines gives you a lustrum of their lives . . . (p. 355) We do not find the condensed energy and meaning of Mr. Br. an objectionable trait. "Hamlet" has to be studied a little, and we remember that Beethoven's symphonies do not possess us till we have heard each half a dozen times. Mr. B. seems to take his poems, after writing them, and crush them at both ends, till he gets the well-knit symmetry and consistency of a Bedouin . . . (p. 358) Paracelsus . . . on his death-bed gives us nearly 11 pages of a discussion upon the nature of man, and the need of establishing knowledge upon love. The thoughts are so grand, the fancy is so rich and illustrative, the whole mood is so sublime, that we forget the dying man upon his pallet, and the listening friend, completely rapt and charmed away from all ideas of unity into regions of still meditation. Thought urged with eloquence holds us enthralled; noble and finished figures surprise and stimulate us. . . . We remember the ascetic loftiness of Milton's metaphysics, only to feel them at last depreciated, for they are the mere *discursus* of a theologian compared with the domestic thoughts and the tender human religion in *Paracelsus*. At least, we have a body of divinity clad in the glowing robes of the epic, speaking with the clear bright voices of the lyric . . . let us enjoy some of these lines together . . . (p. 360) The dying Paracelsus ignores dramatic proprieties, to talk with us concerning God; to lend to dumb, wistful nature, waiting for man's recognition, the hues of his great human spirit, brightening towards the close to fill us with faith and brotherly love. This is the loftiest effort of Mr. Browning's genius; he resigns part of his manifoldness, the fresh earthy humour, the subtle irony, for a great recompense in solemn conceptions of the nature of God. Solemn, yet cheerful, mingling with his vital fancy, like thoughts of death long past, with the sunshine lying aslant the placid hearth. No man can read without acknowledging that here poetry fulfils her highest object. She takes of the things of God, and shows them unto men . . . (p. 384) Nothing of late has so lifted the veil behind our customary routine and feeling, letting in upon them ripples of glory from the sphere of perfect beauty, as the latter half of *Easter Eve*, with its presageful lines, its credible anticipations, its cosmic thought. We forbear to mar the sustained and solemn grace of the poem by quotations of that which every man must buy and read. . . . (p. 385). Is it too much to say that, with this pen for his sceptre, Mr. Br. can exact the

homage of all hearts. . . . Last words of admiration and gratitude linger on our pen. We bespeak for every future line of Mr. Br. a cordial welcome here. And it is pleasant to think that he cannot regard the warm personal friendships he has unconsciously established here, with indifference."

1852. Dr. Asher: 'England's Dichter und Prosaisten der Neuzeit,' Berlin, A. Nauck, gives the first extracts from R. B.'s poems, and the first sketch of his life contained in any Anthology in Germany. Dr. Ahn's 'Selections from R. B.', 1872 (see below) were also submitted to Dr. Asher for revision.

1855. C. Knight, 'Half-Hours with the best Authors,' 3rd ed., reprints *The Pied Piper* in vol. iv. p. 366-374, with a short criticism of the see-saw order prefix. —W. G. Stone.

1856. JOHN RUSKIN. *Modern Painters*, vol. iv. p. 377-9. "Robert Browning is unerring in every sentence he writes of the Middle Ages; always vital, right, and profound; so that in the matter of art, with which we have been specially concerned, there is hardly a principle connected with the mediæval temper, that he has not struck upon in those seemingly careless and too rugged rhymes of his" . . . [then, commenting on a point misst by Shakspeare¹ (because it was specially Italian and un-English) but caught by Browning—"the kind of admiration with which a Southern artist regarded the stone² he worked in; and the pride which populace or priest took in the possession of precious mountain substance, worked into the pavements of their cathedrals, and the shafts of their tombs," he quotes "The Bishop orders his Tomb in St. Praxed's Church"]

"As here I lie" (to)

"Truly, my masters? Ulpian serves *his* need."]

§ 34. "I know no other piece of modern English prose or poetry, in which there is so much told, as in these lines, of the Renaissance spirit,—its worldliness, inconsistency, pride, hypocrisy, ignorance of itself, love of art, of Luxury, and of good Latin. It is nearly all that I have said of the central Renaissance in thirty pages of the 'Stones of Venice,' put into as many lines, Browning's also being the antecedent work. The worst of it is, that this kind of concentrated writing needs so much *solution* before the reader can fairly get the good of it, that people's patience fails them, and they give the thing up as insoluble; though, truly, it ought to be, to the current of common thought, like Saladin's talisman dipped in clear water, not soluble altogether, but making the element medicinal."

1856. Mons. J. Milsand in the 'Revue Contemporaine,' 107^e Livraison: 15 Septembre, Art. III., "La poésie expressive et dramatique en Angleterre: M. Robert Browning," p. 511-546. Reviews *Men and Women*. Part I., a review of the character of English poetry—Shakspeare, Scott, Byron, Wordsworth, Shelley, Tennyson, Browning—at once realist and idealist, dealing with life, anecdote, nature, the other world. Part II. An account of some of Browning's leading poems, and of his method: (p. 520) "il n'entend point nous confier ses impressions intimes, il veut dérouler devant nous un panorama de l'espèce humaine; il veut figurer ce qu'il en a pu apprendre par ses observations et ses retours sur lui-même. Tout au travers de ces deux volumes on respire comme une insatiable avidité de saisir et de vivre en esprit toutes les formes possibles de l'existence. Aux yeux de M. Br., le poète est l'homme qui a vu, qui a vécu, et qui parle pour prêter aux autres son expérience . . . (p. 521) son but est moins de représenter les réalités que de présenter sous la figure d'une réalité toutes les idées qu'il peut se faire de ce qui existe ou de ce qui est seulement concevable. . . . Enoncer une pensée, et par cette pensée même révéler un caractère dont il lui fait prendre la couleur, tel est un des procédés aimés de M. Br. . . . (p. 523) Pittoresque et dramatique, M. Browning l'est au plus haut point: il sait sortir entièrement de lui-même (comme son *Childe Roland*³ suf-

¹ 'Not because he is greater than Shakspeare, but because he is in another element, and has seen other things.'

² Basalt (antique-black) and Peach-blossom marble, here.

³ . . . Le poète a voulu montrer comment les objets les plus simples prennent des aspects terribles dans l'esprit d'un homme terrifié. Toute la pièce respire une sorte de magie infernale. M. Br. disparaît complètement derrière son évocation.

frait pour le prouver); mais en général ses personnages sont moins des images taillées à l'instar de tels modèles vivants que les combinaisons naturelles de tout ce que renferme son esprit, de ce qu'il sait ou de ce qu'il a pensé. On sent partout la présence d'une organisation particulière où l'imagination ne dort pas, où les idées ont l'étrange don d'enfanter, en se rapprochant, des manières d'être en action, des fantômes animés qui lui donnent le spectacle de leurs actes. . . Il en résulte que les créations du poète font à la fois l'effet du rêve et de la réalité. C'est la vérité ordinaire prolongée dans les espaces du possible et l'imaginable; ce sont les aptitudes de tout le monde avec un développement qu'elles n'ont pu prendre chez un être à part;—et en somme, peut-être, ce qui saisit le plus ici, c'est l'individualité qui empreint toutes les pensées de l'écrivain. L'étonnement qu'il cause, tient moins encore aux régions où il vous transporte, qu'aux opérations de son esprit et de son imagination . . . (p. 524) Ses inspirations, ses allures de style, ses images, sont empreintes de la même originalité involontaire. Les productions de sa plume peuvent laisser à désirer; mais, comme expression individuelle, comme reflet de sa propre figure, elles prennent par moments—à mes yeux du moins—je ne sais quelle grandeur colossale . . . (p. 540) En général, la beauté n'est pas ce qui le préoccupe le plus; chaque jour, il semble plus frappé par la physionomie mêlée des êtres et par leur multiple activité. . . il est toujours ému et émouvant. Mais ce qu'il sent vivement, et ce qu'il rend avec la même vivacité, c'est le mouvement entraînant des choses et des pensées, c'est l'explicable puissance qu'elles ont pour nous saisir et nous surprendre, pour nous attirer et nous repousser; c'est toute la série des émotions complexes que peuvent produire en nous les mille faces d'un même objet, ou la brusque variété du panorama mouvant de la vie, ou le jeu intermittent de nos pensées et de nos sensibilités. En un mot, la poésie de M. Browning est celle des vitalités qui sont à l'œuvre dans ce monde; et cela est vrai de la forme comme du fond de ses vers. . . *Il fait vivre ses phrases*; il met dans la marche et dans la course de ses mots, toutes les allures des sentiments, tous leurs *crescendo* et leurs *adagio*, tous les rythmes saccadés de l'âme humaine. Le charme, de la sorte, lui fait parfois défaut . . . mais s'il n'a pas cette magie-là, il en a une autre. *Lui, il est poète par la grandeur et la puissance de ses créations*; il l'est par une imagination sans cesse éveillée et sans cesse occupée à transformer en tableaux et en figures parlantes les découvertes d'une intelligence aussi active; par-dessus tout, je crois, *il est poète par la richesse et par l'affluence de ses impressions*. Qu'il aille où il veut, et qu'on le suive comme on peut, il y a toujours chez lui une chose qui provoque la surprise; c'est la somme de force matrice qu'il dépense, et la rapidité avec laquelle ses facultés se donnent l'une à l'autre la réplique; c'est l'empressement des souvenirs qui viennent illustrer les pensées; (p. 541) c'est le mouvement qui se communique de là aux sentiments; c'est la joie enfin que toutes ces forces trouvent à agir en lui, et qu'il éprouve lui-même à se sentir au milieu de tout ce bruit et à s'étonner des spectacles auxquels il assiste.

(Part III. considers the objections to B.'s poetry and subjects, &c.) p. 544. . "Une forte aspiration vers l'expression, voilà donc en un mot ce qui distingue, à mon sens, l'époque actuelle, et plus particulièrement M. Browning. Lui surtout, son instinct l'entraîne à l'inverse même des Italiens qui, pour conserver la poésie tout poétique, n'ont pas craint de l'appauvrir. Il désirerait étendre son domaine jusqu'à y faire entrer la sphère entière du développement humain. Penser, connaître, et sentir tout ce qui peut être connu, senti, et conçu; retenir en soi toute cette expérience, et trouver moyen, par une sorte de pression continue, de la réduire en tableaux poétiques, telle est, en quelque sorte, la tâche qu'il se donne; et en tant qu'écrivain, ou pourrait dire qu'il se borne à recueillir, parmi les inspirations qui lui viennent, celles qui sont comme un chapitre achevé de ce grand résumé. . . . (After quoting part of p. 8-9 of Browning's *Shelley Essay* above, on the 2 classes of poets, M. Milsand says, p. 546.) M. Browning . . sympathise également avec les deux inspirations, et je serais porté à croire que . . . le travail constant de son esprit n'a été qu'un effort pour le concilier et les fondre en une seule, pour trouver moyen d'être, non pas tour à tour, mais simultanément, lyrique et dramatique, subjectif et pittoresque. Qu'on envisage isolément ses écrits, ou qu'on les envisage en bloc,

on y pressent partout un idéal, un dessein qui ne se dit pas, qui n'est jamais complètement atteint, qui est à peine un parti pris, mais vers lequel aspirent toutes les pensées et les paroles du poète. Cet idéal, c'est celui d'une poésie qui servirait d'iniatrice et qui ferait concevoir le dedans des choses en faisant voir leur dehors; c'est celui d'une poésie qui transporterait au fond des esprits les secrets et les aspects de la réalité, qui y verserait toutes les formes des événements qui ont eu lieu, tous les mobiles qui les ont déterminés, toutes les forces enfin qui ont opéré et qui peuvent opérer dans l'avenir,—et cela afin que les hommes pussent renfermer dans leur poitrine l'histoire universelle, afin qu'ils portassent en eux-mêmes l'univers, et mieux que l'univers réel, quelque chose, du moins, qui vaut mieux pour eux : un univers expliqué et compris, où les phénomènes raconteraient leur propre généalogie, et où l'œil de l'intelligence, au lieu de n'apercevoir que des effets dont la cause reste cachée, verrait directement les causes elles-mêmes accomplir leurs effets."—J. MILSAND.

1857. 'The Christian Remembrancer.' New Series, vol. xxxix. Oct. 1857, p. 361-390. A good article, proving Browning's strong Christian feeling, and well worth reading. Here is a bit on the revision of *Paracelsus*:—"In the first edition of this poem, Mr. B. intimated that it had been the work of only 6 months. . . . But let not the reader who studies *Paracelsus* in the collected edition of 1849, imagine that he has before him the result of hasty labour. Every page has been reconsidered, corrected and improved, with a care to which we hardly know a parallel since the days of Plato. Simpler Saxon words have been inserted instead of Latinised ones; here a line struck out, there some explanatory addition has been made; and in numberless cases the very arrangement of the printing altered, in order to make the sense more clear. Revisions—witness Cowper's, of his 'Iliad'—are often failures; Mr. Browning's has been eminently successful. In scarcely a single instance do we regret the change."¹

1861. 'North British Review,' May 1861, pp. 350-374. "The Poems and Plays of Robert Browning." Article on *Men and Women*; *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*; *Poems*, 2 vols, 1849; *Sordello*.—F. H. EVANS. This is a capital article. It states the difficulties of getting at B.'s meaning, and then brings out his strength.

"we still hold, that the more immediately popular writers of any time will seldom be the men for all time, and that (p. 351) the deepest thoughts cannot be immediately popular. The greatest fame must still be of slow growth, for it has to endure long! And of all our living poets, we believe that Mr. Br. is about the likeliest to win his least fame and fewest readers in his own life-time Haste is [our] great bane. Attention is the great desideratum. Sir Wm. Hamilton used to tell his class that it was better to read one good book ten times over, than to read ten good books only once. So much attention is necessary to get all the good out of a good book; and only in this way can it be got out (p. 351) . . . (p. 352) the poetry of R. B. is pre-eminent amongst our nineteenth century poetry, for those noble qualities of thought and feeling which demand the profoundest attention . . . he (p. 353) seems to delight in that which is peculiar; something remote in interest that will permit of a recondite treatment . . . He *dearly loves to worm his gnarly way to the dark heart of a good knotty problem* that has not been hitherto (p. 354) penetrated. He does not care to tread in the path where the footprints of others are in the least visible; or, if any one has been in that direction, Mr.

¹ 'We will, however, mention two places in which we prefer the edition of 1835. In the striking and beautiful lyric of the Fourth Part, beginning "Over the sea our galleys went," we like "these majestic forms" much better than "the lucid shapes you bring." And in page 187 of this old edition, there was the cautioning note—"Paracelse faisait profession du Panthéisme le plus grossier." (Renauldin.) This note is probably struck out only for the sake of neatness. Yet we desiderate it; for the reader was thereby clearly informed that the sentiments of that speech were those of *Paracelsus*, not of the author; and though we do not in the slightest degree accuse Mr. Browning of *Pantheism*, yet the distinctness of the virtual protest appeared to us wise and satisfactory.'

Br. will strike on a new clue, which leads him much further than others went or saw. For example, in the story of 'King Francis and the Glove,' which De Lorge's lady dropt, to see whether her lover would face death for her sake. According to the ordinary version and common opinion, the lady was rightly served for her heartlessness, when the knight, after leaping among the lions, recovered the glove and flung it in her face. Our poet . . . sees differently. He caught an expression in her face such as told him she had tried the gold of her lover's fine speeches in the crucible, and found it mostly dress; and so she went out calmly amidst all the hooting and mirth, to find the truer love in one who would have died for her, and, like Curtius, jumped at the chance. While De Lorge sank into marrying the beauty that stood so high in the royal favour; and he would fetch *her* gloves, which she had always mislaid when the king called to see her. And when the king told the old story of the glove,

"The wife smiled—'His nerves are grown firmer;
Mine he brings now, and utters no murmur.'"

[The reviewer then notes B's way of expecting his readers to know as much, and be as quick as himself, and passing on "with the most chirping cheeriness," as if they could keep up with him; and lastly blames his wilfully "grotesque" rymes, so funny and effective when the matter is humorous, but seemingly mocking where the subject is serious; and finishing grumbles with the difficulty of *Sordello*, goes on, (p. 357)] "it remains to be said that Mr. Br. is one of the half-dozen original minds now amongst us who are fountain-heads of creative thought . . . *No other living poet has sounded such depths of human feeling, or can smite the soul with such a rush of kindling energy.* Great and lofty and deep as Tennyson is, he has no such range. Indeed, without the least intention of making a comparison, we may venture to say, that since our greatest dramatist wrote, no English poet has reached so wide a range of varied characters as Mr. Browning. He is not a great dramatist. His plays are not for the stage . . . but he is a great dramatic poet. What a line of characters start into memory in illustration of our assertion! Each sufficiently portrayed; often exquisitely, and some with consummate mastery. 'Paracelsus,' half-king, half-quack; the sunny little godsend, 'Pippa'; superb and haughty 'Ottima', poor 'Mildred', and 'Lurio' the Moor; 'Jules and Phene'; 'David,' glorious in his ruddy youth, charming away the madness from King Saul; 'Blougram' the bishop, so catholic in his love of this world's good things; and he, the sumptuous old sinner of St. Praxed's. The Duke and Lady of *The Statue and Bust*, 'the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin'; 'Andrea del Sarto,' and loose champagne-blooded 'Lippo Lippi'; little 'Evelyn Hope'; wise old pondering 'Karshish'; and many more whom we cannot stop to name. To mention one quality of Mr. Br.'s poetry, in which he is pre-eminent, we think, out of 'King Lear,' no pathos can be found more tragic in its tenderness than that in the closing scenes of *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, or more tragic in its grandeur than the pathos of *Luria*."

[The story of *Paracelsus* is then told, with quotations, and at the end,] "He who stood at first where all aspire at last to stand, now stands at last where the Christian is enabled by faith to stand at first. He is humbled, broken, purified. The poem is brought to a climax in a long-sustained swell of noble poetry, and leaves us with the feeling that the shining fragments of this shattered mind will be united to form a wondrous whole in worlds not realized. *Paracelsus* teaches a great lesson, and from end to end there runs a brimming stream of rare poetry. Often it overbrims its banks from its abounding fulness, and runs to waste; but it carries its freightage of purpose right on into haven. For us, each reading has brought out more meaning and fresh beauty (p. 365).

"Mr. Br.'s dramas . . . alone ought to be sufficient to build up the fame of a true and great poet. *King Victor and King Charles* is a profound study of statecraft and human nature, finely introduced and as finely evolved. The

¹ The adulteress and joint murderess, in *Pippa Passes*.

² M. Tresham, the innocently-erring child in *The Blot in the 'Scutcheon*.

³ Sculptor and love-model in *Pippa*.

Return of the Druses is likewise most subtle and intense, with its perplexity of motives solved by passionate action, and the complexity of life made all clear by death. The conclusion of this tragedy is grand as a sunset. The Duchess 'Colombe' is one of our especial favourites; our 'play-queen,' so natural and so brave on her birthday. And 'Pippa,' everybody's favourite, with her one day's holiday, going about like an unwitting missionary of heaven, doing good without knowing it. Imagining the life and world of others as so bright and beautiful, and then, as she passes them by—singing—she touches their world unconsciously with her own brightness, and lights it up with a sun-flash, that shows the good their own happiness, the bad their life's hideousness, and both, that God is in His heaven. The *Blot in the 'Scutcheon'* is full of deep, moving power. The characters are living, breathing, loving and suffering human souls, real enough to stir the profoundest human feelings. By the nearest and dearest ties they are bound up in the dark web of a bitter fate. We see how they might be saved, but cannot save them. We behold them striving in the toils, and the great shadowing cloud overhead coming straight down big and black to bursting. Life and death are brought to the fine turning-point of a single word, and it cannot be spoken. Thus an interest intensely tragic is created. We have before mentioned the passionate pathos of this drama. . . . *Luria*, again, is a magnificent conception, a Moor of nobler nature than Othello, who can magnanimously forgive a great wrong. Florence has called on him to save her, and placed him at the head of her armies. He has led them in triumph up to the very eve of a final victory. But his employers, with the cruel and jealous traits of the Macchiavellian intellect, have set spies on spies at watch on every word, and in every way. Their own kith and kin have proved false to the commonwealth in their intoxication of triumph; how, then, should the stranger keep true with success? He *may* play false; why, then, he *will*. And so, on the assumption of this treason, he is being tried for his life at Florence, whilst he is fighting her battles so faithfully, crushing her foes so mightily, and believing in her, his soul's idol, so proudly! He learns what is their devil's-policy in time to have turned on them and trampled them in the dust. He is urged by those around him to do so. He looks and listens as one by one they turn on their various lights—the green and ghastly light of jealousy; the lurid blue light of suspicion; the blood-red light of revenge—but (p. 367) accepts none of these. He has in his Moorish mind a glimmer of the great white light of God contending with the heathen gloom. No mean feeling can span the girth and greatness of his heart. He towers up sublimely above all the suggestions of evil, and saves Florence at the sacrifice of himself. The gathering great black thunder-cloud of his suffering soul, that hung a moment over Florence, charged with death, breaks into harmless tears of softened pity and generous blessing for her. There is an ineffable pathos in this Luria's life; an inexpressible dignity in his death. The poetry of this drama is one great deep of beauty set with shining truths, and thick with starry thoughts. . . . (p. 368). As an example of our poet's dramatic power in getting right at the heart of a man, reading what is there written, and then looking through his eyes and revealing it all in the man's own speech, nothing can be more complete in its inner soundings and outer keeping, than the epistle containing the 'Strange Medical Experience of Karshish, the Arab Physician', who has been picking up the crumbs of learning on his travels in the Holy Land, and writes to Abib, the all-sagacious, at home. It is so (p. 369) solemnly real and so sagely fine.

"(p. 370). Mr. Br. is nowhere more at home than with the old painters and their pictures. . . . Their pictures are windows through which he sees into their souls, and can show us the colour of life's under-currents. His picture of 'Andrea del Sarto' is perfect as anything of that painter's, who was called the 'Faultless'. Here we find the beating heart belonging to the face that looked out on us so mournfully from a picture at the Manchester Art Treasures' Exhibition. Very perfect is the poet's interpretation of the well-known facts of the painter's love for a beautiful bad woman whose influence darkened his life, embittered his lot; dragged down the lifted hands, and broke the aspiring heart. We write with an engraving of one of Andrea del Sarto's pictures

hanging in front of us. It is curious to read Mr. B.'s poem and look up at the woman who held the painter in her 'strong folds of grace'. It is a bold type of face, physically fine, but a heartless nature lies couchant in the sleepy beauty of those slow eyes' . . . (p. 371) Lastly, we have to speak of Mr. Browning as a great religious poet . . . there is too great a divorce between our poetry and our religion, for us not to rejoice over a poet who (p. 372) possesses the clearest of all seeing faculties—religious faith. The poet's nature, of all others, most needs that high reverence which is to the spirit what iron is to the blood,—the very strength that prevents a relaxing of the moral fibre in the presence of beauty, and keeps the health sound. The poet's nature, of all others, most needs the revelation of Christianity, by virtue of its own peculiar temptations, doubts, and fears, obstinate questionings, and yearnings for the bosom of rest. Mr. Browning has this reverence, and accepts this revelation. He is not, like some poets, half ashamed to mention God or Christ, though he never takes the name of either in vain. Nor does he set up nature for a kind of Pantheistic worship. His poem of *Christmas Eve and Easter Day* is passionately alive with an intense desire for the most personal relationship, lowly of heart as it is lofty in awe. The text of the poem is, 'How hard it is to be a Christian' . . . (p. 374) it is a great pleasure . . . to bear witness that these books are worth knowing; for, with all their shortcomings, they constitute one of the most precious gifts that our time will receive from the hands of Poetry."

1863. 'The Eclectic Review,' No. 23, New Series, May, 1863, p. 436-454. (E. P. Hood on) the *Selections* of 1863, p. 438. "How he (Br.) delights to work and worm and wind his way to the subtlest places of the soul, and to the mazy problems which the soul is perpetually seeking to solve! His knowledge is most recondite. Out-of-the-way magnificent scenes attract, and claim, and charm him—great historic incidents and historical characters, tho' great not by the rustle of the robe, or the clash of the armour along the chief streets of history, but by the exhibition they have made of the greatness of souls. He is a dramatist in all that we usually imply by that word, entering into the innermost arena of the being. His poems are, to quote the title of one of his dramas, *Soul Tragedies* . . . they present an order of tragedy differing from Shakspeare's—the agony, the strife, the internal stress are more internalised. He transfers the circumstances of our being from the *without* to the *within*. In this way they all become noble pictures of the striving and the attaining soul. . . p. 439, *Paracelsus* . . . may be not inappropriately described as a metaphysical or psychological dialogue. It is the picture of a great, noble, yet scornful mind, wrecked by its mere desire to know. . . In the last scene . . . (p. 440) the dying man reviews his life and his mistakes in an autobiography as marvellously touching and true as it is overwhelmingly tender. Love and the love of God resumes its sway over a soul mere knowledge had wrecked. The whole of these dying words are a swell of the richest melody to the close, when faith exclaims—

'If I stoop
Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
It is but for a time; I press God's lamp
Close to my breast; its splendour, soon or late,
Will pierce the gloom: I shall emerge one day!'

. . . It is not the only one of Mr. Browning's poems—rather it is one of many—in which he asserts, but not merely asserts, that love solves, where knowledge perplexes. The same lesson is taught in *Saul*, which, in its condensed and subdued majesty of expression, and its intricate subtlety in dealing with the most perplexed affairs of the human spirit, may rank among the most wonderful productions of the English language . . . if we desired to read aloud that which would furnish the best illustration of the genius of Robert Browning, we should select *Saul* . . . (p. 444) Mr. Browning belongs, in the highest sense, to the poets of faith . . . (p. 445) We turn to another aspect of Mr. Br.'s genius—his condensed, dramatic, passionate effect; indeed, in his shorter pieces, he seems to be master, as in the longer, at once of the power to startle with the mystical and subjective emotion, or with the

¹ See Mr. Radford's letter, p. 160, below.

bold passionate and dramatic scene. We will present two well-known illustrations of this [*Evelyn Hope*, and *The Confessional*]. . . . (p. 449) *Pippa Passes* . . . is . . . one of the most singular illustrations of what we must call the subtlety of our author's genius. It is this subtlety . . . which places him at a greater remove from what is ordinarily conceived of the character of the poet. He not merely seems to disdain the artist function too much, but too much he dwells upon the psychological analogies and distinctions; they so predominate that they make him comparatively unreadable by the ordinary crowd, who, as in everything else, so most especially in poetry, renounce all that calls for labour. With this, however, it must be said that Mr. Br. has a measureless command over versification and language. It rolls on like a great tide, and sweeps up and fills every little bay, or creek, or brook . . . (p. 452) Mr. Browning . . . has meddled with every kind of knowledge. Far beyond any other poet of our day, all his poems deserve the name of studies, and his volumes form a rich mosaic. . . . Pity that a writer so gifted and (p. 453) faithful to our purest and highest instincts, many of whose verses, too, show such richness of melody, should not have cultivated more the charm of that music which wins, as well as that power which subdues and overawes. Yet how ungrateful this is: as well murmur because Milton has not cut up 'Paradise Lost' into pretty little liltings of song . . . our author holds his thoughts, and many of them, in a leash at once, stands in the centre and surveys the round, and . . . seems beyond any other poet of our age; while sometimes inferior to his loftier brethren in music, to be far beyond any in *light*; and if apparently not equal to them in the sharpness and definition of his imagination, to be beyond them, not only in his apprehension of the mystery, but his power to front it. While standing on the earth, he seems able to wield, most of any, words towering to the infinite heights or depths of passion. Nor shall this article be closed without a reference to his inimitably musical verses to his gifted wife: 'What, there's nothing in the moon noteworthy?'—[to the end of *One Word More*.]

1864. 'The Eclectic and Congregational Review,' July, p. 61-72. "Robert Browning's new Volume." *Dramatis Personæ* [rev. by Edwin Paxton Hood]. "We . . . are not alone in making the confession that of the living masters of English poetry, Robert Browning gives to us the greatest measure of delight. We are not careful to contest for him the chief place among his brethren, but we know not how to admit the right of any other to a higher . . . In painfully anxious yearning after artistic and lyrical melody, Browning is certainly transcended by his only possible rival, Tennyson. We do not meet [in Br.] the wonderfully happy artfulness of expression which seems not like a making but a happening; but this is the only feature in which he is transcended, and we are quite aware that many would prefer—in many instances we should ourselves greatly prefer—the more unwrought, the sometimes weird, and frequently awakening flash of mystical expression which wins more from the heart than the highest combination of mere music regarded as the arrangement of notes and tones. But it is in the converse with distant persons and scenes, and the making the ages and their histories, events and persons, vehicles for living instruction—it is in the exploring the profoundest recesses of human spirit—the loitering and the marvelling over, and seeking the solution of the most tough and knotty problems of human nature—it is in the making all this the disc on which a strange and most musical imagination plays off its powers—it is in a pathos infinitely too deep for any but eclectic hearts, sufferers, doubters, and seers, to have much sympathy—it is in a reticence and reserve of verse which leaves you wondering, broken presently by a gush and sweep, and wing of verse which leaves you panting—it is by allusions and eruditions which mark the scholar but instruct the learner, set in words which make a carcanet of precious jewels over the pages, that this author's superabundant power is made known . . . he is a poet for scholars and students, and only for those who have in them the faculty or the appreciation of the faculty of poetry, not patent to common eyes . . . yet, what music is in Mr. Br.'s verse! No music like it, only that it needs a certain education in life; a certain ear-experience and culture, not merely to appreciate it, but even to apprehend it. . . . [From *Sordello* is quoted 'Charlemagne and Hildebrand'; then *Abt Vogler* (all

quoted), the *Death in the Desert*, and *Caliban* are notist, and all] the most simply sacred and yet not less profound *Rabbi ben Ezra*, a fine setting to English verse of the spirit of all Hebrew psalmody and literature—a soliloquy of the Rabbi in his age. . . . We have quoted at length, but only in the hope that every one able to read these verses will turn, not only to this volume, but to all the works of Robert Browning, most far seeing, most deeply feeling, most erudite, and reverent of living poets."

1865. JN. SKELTON on the causes of Browning's ruggedness. Any poetry . . . which relies exclusively upon effective and musical *wording*, does not spring from, and cannot retain a permanent hold on, the heart. It is a mere husk. There is no kernel of thought or feeling. Mr. B's ruggedness arises mainly from his determination to say precisely what he wants to say. He allows no consideration to deter him from expressing his thought with perfect exactness. Grace, purity of language, symmetry of form are admirable, whenever they are consistent with absolute truthfulness; but they become tawdry ornaments, sentimental toys, the indications of an effeminate and slothful nature, when attained at its expense . . . he entertains a genuine artistic distaste for the gaudy and pretentious work, which does not stand the test of time, of prolonged examination, and intimate acquaintance. So that Mr. B's poems are irregular only in the sense that Shakspeare's plays are irregular. The irregularity in both cases is a sign of intellectual affluence. Br. takes the sincerest delight in quaint ingenious combinations: no poet ever lighted upon more whimsical rhymes, or managed more intricate metres. The grotesque rhymes of Br., like the poetic conceits of Shakspeare, are merely the holiday frolic of a rich and vivacious imagination. Healthy masculine vigour is apt to run riot at times. It is very significant also that Br., who has tried his hand at almost every form of verse, has never written a Sonnet. Sonnet-writing is a pretty, but rather solemn dexterity;—a sleight-of-hand business,—the knack of presenting an emotion in a given number of lines. It demands, consequently, unity, if not severity, of conception; simplicity, if not rigidity of expression. . . . The passionate and affluent genius of Browning rejects this yoke. A state dress prevents the play of his muscles. . . . 1865. [Jn. Skelton] Shirley. 'A Campaigner at Home,' p. 258-9.

1867. 'Nuova Antologia di Scienze, Lettere ed Arti.' vol. V. Fasc. vii. Luglio 1867. Firenze, p. 468-481: "Poeti e Romanzieri Inglesi Contemporanei. I. Robert Browning." A review of the *Poet. Works*, 1864, 3 vols., and *Dramatis Personæ*, 1865, by Enrico Nencioni. . . . "Roberto Browning è uno di quei rarissimi poeti veri i quali fanno sempre fare un passo all' arte, iniziatori e ispiratori ad un tempo. L'influenza esercitata da lui, prima latente or manifesta, nell' ordine del pensiero e in quel della forma, è grandissima; e solo paragonabile a quella esercitata, in (p. 469) altra sfera, e con altri intendimenti, da Tommaso Carlyle. Ambedue infatti han destato ardenti simpatie e avversioni invincibili. . . . L'Inghilterra e l'America, i giovani specialmente, han riconosciuto in Browning un gran poeta filosofo. *Dramatis Personæ*, uscito nel '64, segna l'apogeo della sua fama. . . . Dopo i tragici monologhi e il riso convulso di Byron, dopo le ardenti e generose utopie dello Shelley, dopo il misticismo puritano di Wordsworth, e il paganesimo passionato di Keats; dopo i sogni di Coleridge, e le fantasie orientali di Moore, e l'epiche visioni di Southey, si aspettava il poeta che dipingesse le realtà della vita intima ed esteriore, l'uomo qual fu e quel è, nel tempo e nello spazio, studiato con amore ed inteso da una simpatia universale, simile a quella dello scienziato nella sua imparzialità, ma più delicata e più profonda; si aspettava il poeta che nelle indagini psicologiche non dimenticasse i corpi e le forme, ma le osservasse e le rendesse in tutta la loro sterminata varietà, in tutte le differenze dei loro individuali caratteri,—che, restando sempre poeta, fosse insieme un filosofo et un artista.—Tutto ciò fece Robert Browning. . . . (p. 472) Pochi poeti han cominciato così gloriosamente la loro carriera. *Paracelso* non par lavoro di giovane, ma di provetto artista; di uomo che ha molto sofferto e provato, osservato moltissimo, bevuto fino alla sazietà nella coppa della scienza e della vita. Già là sono in germe, e alcune già in fiore, tutte quelle rare qualità che poi distinsero Browning dagli altri

poeti contemporanei, e fecero di lui un vero rivelatore di nuove regioni nell' infinito campo dell' arte. E già nella scelta dell' argomento si annunzia il carattere del poeta. La curiosità scientifica, il desiderio di tentare sentieri inesplorati, il dispregio della scienza tradizionale e scolastica che si palesa nella vita di Paracelso doveano potentemente tentare un poeta avido di comprendere l' uomo e le cose, di andar per vie non battute, di scrutare e toccare le più occulte e delicate fibre del cuore umano . . . (p. 474) Fin dalle prime pagine del *Paracelso* si riconosce in Br. un gran poeta pittore . . . (p. 475) Br. è poeta eminentemente drammatico anche nella lirica. . . . Filosofo e critico, egli studia un' epoca, comprende un' idea, analizza un (p. 476) sentimento, poi ha bisogno, da vero artista, di dar corpo al concetto, di personificare, di drammatizzare. Egli ha compreso e risentito l' ardore per le cose artistiche, per tutti gli oggetti decorativi che era generale al tempo del Rinascimento; ad è al suo *'Vescovo ordinantesi la tomba in S. Prassede'* che fa rivelare lo spirito vero dell' epoca. . . Br. fa parlare Andrea del Sarto colla troppa famosa sua moglie, e in quel discorso c'è la storia di un' anima. Le profonde ansietà, le curiosità febbrili della decrepita società, e le impressioni dei savj pagani alle prime notizie della vita e della dottrina di Cristo, sono, con una impersonalità degna di Goethe, espresse in *Cleone* e in *Karshish*. E che profondità di pensiero filosofico si cela sotto il velo bizzarro dell' *Humour* in *Calibano a Setebos*, e in *Mr. Sludge! Holy-Cross Day*, tipo della poesia umoristica di Browning, ha riso e lacrime, e fremiti . . . (p. 477) Il cuore dell' umanità palpita sempre nei versi di Browning. La sua larga e calda simpatia tutto intende e traduce. Egli ha saputo personificare e drammatizzare le astrazioni più metafisiche, i sentimenti più delicati e ineffabili. . . . In tutte le opere di Br., poema, lirica, e dramma, si fa sentire e sopra tutto sentire, la incessante e solenne voce dell' umanità . . . (p. 478) *Pippa passa*, dramma lirico e fantastico, è forse il più popolare di tutti i componimenti poetici di Browning. . . . In uno di questi [quattro piccoli drammi di *P. p.*] è rappresentato l' adultero amore di Sebaldo e di Ottima con efficacia veramente degna di un compatriotta di Shakespeare. . . . In *Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day* . . . il poeta trattò (restando però sempre poeta, e poeta pittore) le più profonde e delicate questioni che agitano la mente e la coscienza dell' uomo moderno . . . (p. 479) E questa preoccupazione dei grandi problemi della Fede e dell' Anima gli ha ispirato vari poemi filosofici di fondo, e, al solito, di forma drammatici, come *Morte nel deserto*, *Cleone*, *il Vescovo Blougram* ec.

“Nell' ultimo libro di Browning (*Dramatis Personae*) l' altezza del pensiero filosofico predomina in ogni poesia; dalle passionate come *James Lee*, alle umoristiche come *Mr. Sludge, the Medium*. Come saggio di magnifica eloquenza poetica, veggasi *Morte nel deserto*, dove san Giovanni morente discorre delle dottrine evangeliche e della religion dello spirito: poesia elevata e profonda che parla al cuore e all' intelligenza. Pochi libri poetici contengono, in sì poche pagine, tante idee nuove e grandi, tanti caratteri, tante pitture; da *Caliban selvaggio*, al *Byron de nos jours*, da san Giovanni, agli spiritisti, da un ritratto di vergine, alla stanza mortuaria della Morgue, da *Abt-Vogler* . . . alla squisita elegia d'amore intitolata *Maggio e la Morte*. Le poesie di questo libro sono vere armonie della vita.

“Si sarà visto che uno dei caratteri della poesia di Br. è l' *humour*. Vario in tutto, Br. è anche in questa sua qualità variatissimo. Il suo *humour* talora è grottesco, energico . . . come nella *Tragedia dell' Eretico* e in *Caliban*; talvolta sottile e raffinato come in *Mr. Sludge*; talvolta passionato come nella *Querela d'un Amante*; talvolta l'accento comico e il sorriso inoffensivo predominano . . . come in *Fra Lippo Lippi* . . . e nei versi intitolati *Su in villa, e giù in città*, capolavoro d'ironia e di descrizione, genere nuovo di satira. . .

“Fra le poesie di Browning in cui parla la passione pura, e che sono vere voci del cuore . . . mi basti indicare *Amore fra le ruine*, *Presso il focolare* (p. 480): (dove non sai se più ammirare la pittura del paese, o quella del sentimento) l' *Ultima Cavalcata*, *In un anno*, e *Maggio e la Morte*. Egli manifesta il profondo e squisito suo sentimento dell' arte plastica, le sue simpatie pei vecchi maestri toscani, pei grandi realisti del 400, in molte poesie: e fra le tante consacrate alla pittura e ai pittori come *Pictor ignotus*, *Andrea del Sarto*, *Fecchie pitture in Firenze*, mi piace ricordarne qui una intitolata *l' Angelo*

Custode. . . Conosco poche poesie dove l'effusione lirica sia così calda, e derivi così spontanea del soggetto medesimo. . . .

"Percorrendo l'intera opera di Roberto Browning, si vedrà che ispirazione e temi gli ha dato spesso, quasi sempre, l'Italia. (Vedi *Uomini e Donne*, *Sordello*, *Le Tragedie*, *Christmas-Eve & Easter-Day*.) Le sue città e le sue campagne, le sue chiese e le (p. 481) sue ruine, i suoi dolori e le sue speranze furon da lui costantemente cantate. Come egli ami la terra che lo ispirò, lo provano le sue lunghe dimore fra noi, e l'accento commosso, quasi d'amante, con cui egli parla del nostro cara paese. 'Apritemi il cuore, e vi leggerete inciso *Italia*' così egli esclama in *De-Gustibus*. E negli anni amari in cui l'austriaco strascinava la sciabola vittoriosa per le vie delle nostre città, egli non che disperare delle nostre sorti, o insultarci come altri poeti stranieri, impreccò ai nostri oppressori, sperò, e ci annunciò i giorni che abbiamo visto.—E alla sua voce potente univasi quella dolcissima dell' angelica moglie sua, la quale, e nel poemetto intitolato *Le finestre di casa Guidi*, e nelle *Poesie ultime*, cantò con passione d'italiana, l'Italia. . . ."

1868. Rev. J. W. Ebsworth, 'Karl's Legacy,' ii. 79. "Our Favourite Poet" [R. Br.]. 6 stanzas of 6, *ababcc*. "She whom I loved, gave his Songs to me."

1868. 'Eclectic and Congregational Review,' Dec. Art. II. 'Robert Browning,' p. 441-470, by E. Paxton Hood. Rev. *Poetical Works*, 6 vols. 1868. After remonstrating with the author somewhat, and his publishers more, for the dearth of Br.'s books,—“Publishers are a thick-skinned race of mortals; and as they can do anything, so they can bear anything.”—Mr. Hood goes on, “Mr. Browning is one of those writers who need the finger of criticism to beckon the attention of ordinary readers. His works, to readers who have made themselves familiar and at home with his method, furnish the richest enjoyment; but amusement, the charm of the (p. 442) swift dulcet melody . . . is not in the way of these writings; in fact, they are no more amusing, or pleasing, than are the poems of Milton. The thought, the dramatic life and action . . . the very music and metre, all alike demand thought, study, or reflection. . . . They are far from being mere . . . pictures of life to be apprehended by any and by every reader; they are especially poems, both of deepest and highest culture, and in the course of them the reader will find every variety of thought of our times touched upon, and frequently some strong, concise, clear word, showing to what purpose the writer has expressed himself upon it . . . (p. 443). A word, a line . . . sets him free for a marvellous course of dramatic delineation; thus the letter of *Cleon* is a branching stream of talk from the slight parenthesis in Paul's sermon on Mars Hill.—‘As certain also of your own poets have said;’ and the art of the piece is very striking. . . . Yet the burden of the whole letter is, to unfold the pantings, strivings and reasonings of a cultured soul, of those ages, seeking after God, or rather, after some abiding evidences of its own immortality; but dramatic everywhere,—in the churches or squares of old mediæval cities; on the canals of Venice; from the stores and stories of historic legend, myth, or fact. It is never sufficient to Mr. Browning to read or to see; his soul seems instantly to translate itself, to possess and to animate the character or the incident; thus, *In a Gondola*, a poem of only a few pages, presents us with a whole drama and tragedy; the lyrics and the lights floating over the old Venetian waters, the secrecy and the assassination, and no description; all living, active, real. One of the most astonishing is the *Heretic's Tragedy* . . . (p. 444). *My Last Duchess*, too, does not need to be quoted; that is already a part of the English language; one of his shortest pieces, it is as sharply cut as the finest piece of statuary, or it stands out limned with the perfect distinctness of a painting of Velasquez or Van Dyke; but again, it is no description . . . it is a whole drama in about a hundred lines . . . (p. 445). *Sordello* . . . is one of the wealthiest poems in our language. . . . It is perhaps the hardest . . . (but) it is nevertheless an eminently great poem . . . in *Sordello* stands out pretty complete the chief revelation of all Browning's poetry; viz. the doctrine of the value of every soul, and the relation of all the work of every soul for its own sake; he has been fond of reiterating this lesson in many ways and places. *The Statue and the Bust* teaches very much the same lesson . . . (p. 446) . . .

'Let a man contend to the uttermost
For his life's set prize, be it what it will—

And the sin I impute to each frustrate ghost
Is, the unlit lamp and the ungirt loin.

A frustrate ghost, a frustrate life; but when is a life frustrated? How do we know how apparent failure and flawed work tell on the souls hereafter? The faith, that all real work tells somehow on the assured being, the eternal inheritance, the immortality, is one of the most incessant lessons reiterated by the poet. We have it in that fine poem *Abt Vogler*, when he exclaims,—

'All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist . . .
And what is our failure here, but a triumph's evidence
For the fulness of the days!'

We have the same lesson in that ineffable little poem, *Evelyn Hope* . . . (p. 447). It is the same lesson (that) shines out as a hope to the unfortunate lover in the *Last Ride together* . . . we might continue illustrations of verses rich with best hopes for what seems poor, broken, frustrated human nature; and thus everywhere Robert Browning's poetry carries the reader forward by high, indefinite hopes; it becomes truest ministrations; and thus of *Sordello*, this is throughout its master idea, its controlling purpose . . . (p. 448) . . . *Sordello* . . . poet . . . patriot, soldier, lover, frustrated in all; a dim, indefinite character enough, historically, but quite sufficient for the poet's purpose, whose object was chiefly, or only, to tell the story of a soul, and how it gained, out of all in which it seemed only to fail. . . And hence it is that all the steps and processes are described by which the soul of *Sordello* comes into play. . . To live is indeed to strive, altho' the chief idea of life is not merely realized in that which is ordinarily called doing,—the realist's perpetual cry,—although his sense of the thing done is limited by that which stands present, complete, and accomplished to the eye; to him, therefore, all failure or incompleteness is mere baffled, foiled existence. Not so, says the poet¹,—'*Ends accomplished turn to means*;' (p. 448) and there is a world of work out of sight which has told upon, and borne along, the individual soul. . . And therefore the poet conducts the argument forward, and teaches that souls have to wait for death to live. . . We must 'Wait for some transcendent life reserv'd by Fate To follow this'—Ill and well, then, sorrow and joy, beauty and ugliness, virtue and vice, the larger and the less,—all qualities, are modes of time; soul is thrust into matter; joy comes when so much soul is wrecked in time on matter: but suppose sorrow? well, then, instead of joy, use grief; *all is to disenfranchise the brilliancies* (p. 449) *of the soul*. We feel we are what we feel; we know what we feel: so much is truth to us. But by the same teaching we learn that the small is a sphere as perfect as the great, to the soul's absoluteness. . . It is manifest that a poem of upwards of 200 pages, every word of which is a nerve palpitating and thrilling with such lofty living hopes as those we have indicated, is not to be dealt with in a page or two of ephemeral criticism; but upon many accounts we may wonder that so tardy and begrudging a praise has been rendered to its remarkable merits; and we wonder at this the more, because, like so many great poems, it is crowded with small exquisitely cut cameos, delicate miniatures, sweet little etchings and landscapes, more or less . . . finished . . . we will venture to select a few pictures of the middle ages, 600 years since.

Sunset.

A last remains of sunset dimly burn'd
O'er the far forests,—like a torch-flame
turn'd
By the wind back upon its bearer's hand
In one long flare of crimson:—as a brand
The woods beneath lay black.

Bk. I. l. 81-5.

Soldiers.

And not a face
But wrath made livid, for among them
were
Death's staunch purveyors, such as have
in care
To feast him. Bk. I. l. 88-91.

¹ Compare *Rabbi Ben Ezra* on this.

Middle-Age Castles.

Day by day
Choosing this pinnacle (&c.).
Bk. I. l. 262-8.

Middle-Age Rooms.

Glide we by clapping doors, with sudden
glare
Of cressets vented on the dark (&c.). . .
Bk. I. l. 313, &c.

Byzantine Architecture.

Pass within
A maze of corridors contriv'd for sin
(&c.). . . Bk. I. l. 389-405.

And Camp at Midnight.

'Midnight! the watcher nodded on his
spear,' &c. Bk. I. 884-893.

An old Town. (Bk. III. l. 882.)

A grim town,
Whose cramped ill-featured streets huddled about
The minster for protection (&c.).

Man and Nature.

No! Youth once gone is gone;
Deeds let escape are never to be done
(&c.). Bk. III. l. 93-102.

A Soldier of the Middle Ages.

[*Salvaguerra*] So agile, quick
And graceful turn'd the head on the
broad chest

Encased in pliant steel (&c.).

Bk. IV. l. 429.

(p. 453.) Poets before now have had their work, as a whole, likened to the immense space, the various art, the cryptic gloom, the quaint mellowed radiance, the manifold enclosures of chapelries and shrines, the faint flicking tapers, and the ever burning lamps of Gothic cathedrals; but we know not to which of the poets this description might very aptly apply, beside Robert Browning. He is the poet of the Gothic,—agony and harmony in unity, agony working itself at last to a place in the great harmony of the whole. Symmetry is by no means a word which fitly describes a great Gothic church, and it will by no means describe Mr. Br.'s works: . . . of all architecture, the Gothic is the most human representative in stone of the terror and suffering, the awe and the infiniteness of the pained, weary, watching, aspiring heart of man. This is just the effect of these writings [of Robert Browning's]; ornament may be here, but more than ornament was in the intention of the writer. . . The reader, indeed, finds every thing. A strange, weird freak of verse, like *Holy Cross Day*, or *The Glove*, or *The Pied Piper*, may jut out, as we have said, like a gargoyle, through which the writer empties what is not less the serious fancy of the hour; but there are statues, as of warriors, saints, and martyrs; the pure, chaste forms of holy men and high-hearted women, who thro' suffering have attained and won their [p. 454] right to, the niche from which they seem to bend to give animation to the crowd of sufferers and strugglers on the vast pavements below. We seem to mingle our figures of the Gothic architect and the Gothic poet. Of all writers since Dante, with whom we are acquainted, we think we should speak of Robert Browning as the poet of suffering,¹ suffering on a great scale, thought impelled and passion wrought. (p. 463.) Most critics and readers . . . have, we believe, taken exception to what has seemed to them the rugged workmanship of these poems: it is admitted that Browning is a poet, a great poet, but he is no artist . . . what substantially is meant . . . [is] . . . that Br.'s poems are not easy reading. Prettiness is patent to a very ready and easy admiration; power must have fewer admirers than prettiness; and to the measure of power, is at once the difficulty of rendering in metre, and apprehending in the sense of the reader. To us there seems an exact and most harmonious fitness between the thoughts of the poet and the measure in which he expresses himself . . . in some pieces . . . every syllable seems to express a motion . . . of the *Laboratory* we follow one critic in quoting one verse:—

'He is with her; and they know that I know
Where they are, what they do; they believe my tears flow
While they laugh, laugh at me, at me fled to the drear
Empty church, to pray God in, for them!—I am here.'

¹ In another review Mr. Hood speaks of the impression of having suffered much, as that which *George Eliot's* works, with all their wealth of humour, give him.

... these . . . *Dramatic Lyrics* . . . are not merely lyrical as setting to song a passing emotion in the poets' mind : he has possessed himself of the character, or rather is possessed by the character, and so he sings . . . but (p. 464) one of the most remarkable instances of the manner in which the very form of syllables becomes dramatic, and lyrical too, is the *Grammarian's Funeral* . . . the measure of the syllables keeps time with the very footfall of the bearers of the corpse . . . (p. 465) if it be conceded that the man is a great poet, *the reader may rely upon it, (that) the defect is in himself, and not in the author*, if to him the workmanship seems lacking in (p. 466) symmetry. Mr. Br. is a kind of Michael Angelo among our modern poets ; he works upon a great scale, he hews at immense blocks, for the vast figures he designs ; his grace is not the grace of the drawing-room, but the sweep of a vaulted sky, of the far-off round horizon of the distant sea, of swelling downs, and upheaving mountain chains. . . Many a (p. 467) reader has perhaps inquired, what meaning the poet attached in his own mind to that remarkable piece, *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came*. It is evidently a dark page from some pilgrim's progress or other . . . (p. 468). It is one of the most cheerless, weird, utterly desponding fancies in poetry, without a line to light the reader's sense of meaning beyond that which a drear experience and knowledge may supply, to illustrate a picture of life shelving down over the steeps, all drear and desolate to the close,—nature, love, all withering into loneliness and disappointment, until the Dark Tower at the end of the journey, grim as are its fastnesses, becomes as an inn to the weary traveller, a refuge and a rest.

"Such is Robert Browning. We agree with those who regard his works as a tonic. More robust poet or writer our language has not produced. In some particulars he reminds us of old Ben Jonson, in his learning, in his elaboration of character, in his pouring the whole wealth of scholarship and language along to develop a character. . ."

"What constitutes . . . a strong writer ? not the power to heap a larger amount of strong and passionate, altho' they may be fitting, words together ; it is the sense he conveys, that he has travelled farther and seen more. A strong writer is another term for a great discoverer . . . he has lookt at things with so clear and steady a gaze, that out of the darkness new light has come upon his vision, and he has been able to transfer it to his pages for our benefit. Wordsworth in this spirit interpreted nature . . . (p. 469). But Browning has not found nature so pre-eminently interesting. *Man is the entire subject of his whole thought* ; nature takes her place quite in the background. Man, or men and women, thro all the circles and ages of revolving time ; man anywhere, anyhow ; Soul, doing, suffering, achieving, sinning, thinking, painting, or fighting ; Man is perpetually and perennially interesting ; a sense of the indestructible existence of soul seems to be ever present with him. All work abides, perpetuates itself somehow or other ; the mysterious *here*, and *now*, are themselves the mysterious *beyond* to those who lived ages since ; while still stretches forward the mysterious beyond for us. *It is given to some few writers to add to our sense of being* ; their pages are so surcharged with soul, that the soul of the reader becomes more vital, or more consciously vital ; while reading, the destiny seems deeper and larger. Such words have the effect described by our poet himself ; they liberate, enfranchise, and set free some ray imprisoned in the spirit, of which until then it was not aware ; and this we are told is knowledge : not that the mind accumulates more, but rather that veils drop, walls fall, and skies clear before it and around it, so that it simply becomes able to be itself : this is the highest work of all teaching and spiritual ministration. The reader remembers how this has been done often by a line of Shakspeare or of Wordsworth, and to that same great soul-assisting race of men Robert Browning belongs ; to the order of those who help us, rather to see great truths than to manipulate little ones ; to whom poetry is no jingle of words, or pretty amusement for harpsichord or piano, but rather a divine trigonometry, a process of celestial triangulation, a taking observations of celestial places and spheres, an attempt to estimate our world, its place, its life amidst the boundless immeasurable sweeps of space and time, or if describing, then describing the animating stories of the giants, how they fought and fell, or conquered . . . violets and roses

have a real and lovely relation . . . to the great fountain principles of life, and their beauty comforts and encourages ; but the mighty oak out of which we can build the ship, or the tall aspiring palm, which may give life and food to a whole village, are more than violet and rose, and it is no diminution to the loveliness of the flower which blooms at their feet, to say it. So a great all-inclusive strength of song, which is as a battle march to warriors, or as the refreshment of brooks and dates to the spent (p. 470) and toiling soldiers on their way, is more than the pretty idyll, whose sweet and plaintive story pleases the idle hour or idle ear. And for these reasons, because we believe it [Mr. B.'s poetry] fulfils these conditions, we hail Mr. Browning as one of the surest aids to faith and trust in the present, and one most certain of . . . immortality in time, as one of the greatest poets of the future."

1868-9. *The Ring and the Book*. ('Edinb. Rev.' July 1869, p. 164-184.) "Like the majority of poets, he [R. B.] is remarkable for a highly sensitive emotional nature, and, like some of the great poets only, he is at the same time and to an equal degree distinguished by the serenity of his intellect. He knows . . . human nature ; [is] familiar with all its gradations, from the 'poach'd filth' of its lowest depravity to the 'white blamelessness' that crowns as with inviolate snow its moral heights. Everywhere he reveals his love of what is noble, his hatred of what is ignoble ; but he never loses the balance of an even mind in adjudicating praise or blame. Through human nature he discerns clearly the problem of human nature, the enigma of man's existence and destiny, that 'painful riddle of the earth' which has overthrown the calm, and vanquished the courage, of so many a noble mind. Although he confronts that problem always with deep earnestness, he displays something of an eager alacrity in grappling it ; and he has never yet come sad and crestfallen from the encounter. To blend a profound knowledge of human nature, and a keen perception of the awful problem of (p. 165) human destiny, with the conservation of a joyous, hopeful spirit—to know men and not despair of them, to battle with men's spiritual foes and not be broken by them—is given only to the very strong. This is to be a valiant and unvanquished soldier of humanity."

[The Reviewer then divides great men of the intellectual type into 2 classes : those who have been vanquished by the problem of man's existence and destiny—like Shelley, Byron, Heine, Carlyle,—and those who, although they have not vanquished it, have not been vanquished by it, but have kept their hope and cheer, like Shakspere, Goethe, Tennyson, and Browning. He then sketches the *Ring and Book* story, and gives (p. 178)] "extracts as specimens of the dramatic power of Mr. Br.'s work. That power can only be rightly appreciated by those who will study the poem ; and they will find, that the more attention they give to it, the closer the scrutiny to which they subject it, the more vividly distinct will grow the individual characters of the drama. These are not lay figures through the mouth of which, after they have been twisted into the fitting *pose*, the poet declaims appropriate sentiments ; they are men and women throbbing with life and passion, giving vent in words to the emotions of love and hate, and hope and fear, and good and evil desires, that stir within them, and which find only intense expression because they are intensely felt. These characters range, we may almost say, through the entire scale of human nature. Beside the arch-villain, that true 'spark of hell' Count Guido, and his four cut-throats, we have notable specimens of the 'subordinately vile' ; Marzi-Medici, pusillanimous Governor of Arezzo, who will not help the weak, lest he offend the strong ; the 'hireling' Archbishop, who will not save from the wolf's paw, the lamb that is within reach of his crozier ; the craven monk . . . Guido's two brothers, the Abate 'fox-faced horrible priest', and the young Girolamo, hybrid between wolf and fox . . . and the mother of these, 'The hag that gave these three abortions birth' . . . Then we have types of average humanity—impulsive gossip-loving busy-bodies . . . some philosophical dandy . . . the lawyers . . . (p. 179). Lastly, to set off against all this superlative and subordinate villany, this humdrum of the commonplace, this professional insincerity and greed—to set off against these, and vindicate the majesty of human nature, stand forth Pope Innocent in all the clarity of wisdom, of Christian fortitude and grace ; Pompilia in the

purity, the sweetness of womanly innocence; Caponsacchi in the full brightness of spiritual chivalry, a passionate pure knight of God. *In English literature the creative faculty of the poet has not produced three characters more beautiful or better to contemplate than these three*; and if the ethical teaching of Mr. Browning were confined to the profound moral which underlies these characters, he would deserve the study which his writings exact at our hands. . . . Scattered throughout these volumes are passages of rare spiritual and ethical value; but the sublime morality of the work is embodied in the magnificent monologue of Pope Innocent. . . He passes the characters of this awful tragedy in review. He comes to Caponsacchi, in whose act of lawless chivalry—the rescue of Pompilia, the flight with her Romewards—was there not danger even to the pure of soul? Yes, and ‘praise to God,’ since in the ardour of a passionate fealty the true knight of God will pray not to be spared the battle, but to be vouchsafed the occasion of victory . . .

‘. . . was the trial sore?
Temptation sharp! Thank God a second time!
Why comes temptation, but for man to meet,
And master, and make crouch beneath his foot,
And so be pedestalled in triumph? Pray
“Lead us into no such temptations, Lord!”
Yea, but, O Thou whose servants are the bold,
Lead such temptations by the head and hair,
Reluctant dragons, up to who dares fight,
That so he may do battle, and have praise!’

[Then, showing how Br. holds that sin and sorrow here are meant to ‘evolve the moral qualities of man,’ and so enable him ‘to wring from out all pain, all pleasure for a common heritage to all eternity’; how within B.’s ‘circle of experience burns the central truth, Power, Wisdom, Goodness.—God’: and therefore his ‘speech must be throughout the darkness,’ ‘It will end: The light that did burn, will burn’! (p. 182) so thro all trials he has faith.]

“So never I miss footing in the maze;

No! I have light, nor fear the dark at all.”

This is the true felicity of men—to hear, amid the din and direful spectacle of the battle, the sage servant of God and soldier of humanity proclaim, not in any cry of ecstatic hope, but in the calm clear voice of conviction, his faith in the victory to come:

‘No! I have light, nor fear the dark at all.’ (p. 182.)

This is what we meant when we said that Mr. Br. was distinguished by the serenity of his intellect; when we called him a valiant soldier of humanity; when we numbered him with those who, if they have not vanquished, have at least not been vanquished, by the problem of human nature.”

1869. ‘Forster’s Life of Landor,’ II, 42. See also Forster’s remarks, same page.—J. D. C.

1869. April 1. Bp. Thirlwall, in ‘Letters to a Friend,’ 1881, ii. 184. “The *Ring and the Book*. . . here and there is really difficult reading. . . I am sometimes forced to read a passage 3 or 4 times before I am sure that I understand it. That is, no doubt, a fault, tho’ I think it arises mainly from an exaggeration of a merit. It carries the Chinese-like condensation of English style a little too far. There is an increase of vigour as in the clenching of a fist, but it costs time and pain to open it.

“It is not, however, necessary for the enjoyment of the story to stop at these knotty points; but if it was, there would be ample compensation for the exertion in the amazing ingenuity of the invention, and beauty of the execution, tho’ a little marred by occasional negligences, which such a poet can well afford, as they rather produce the effect of conscious power.”

1872. *Fifine at the Fair*: on or after June 6, reviewed in a ‘Daily Telegraph’ leader, the ‘Athenæum,’ ‘Examiner,’ ‘Scotsman,’ ‘John Bull,’ the ‘Graphic,’ ‘Manchester Guardian,’ ‘Spectator’ (a fair analysis), ‘Liverpool Mercury,’ ‘North British Quarterly,’ ‘Illustrated London News,’ ‘Literary World,’ 2 articles (the

- best of all), 'Observer,' 'Fortnightly Review' (by S. Colvin), 'Saturday Review,' 'Standard,' 'North Atlantic Monthly,' 'The Times,' 'Daily News' (a few lines in the summary of the year's books), 'Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper.'—Mrs. Sutherland-Orr's Collections.
1873. *Red-Cotton Night-Cap Country*: on or after May 5, reviewed in the 'Globe,' 'Standard,' 'Daily News,' 'Hour,' 'Echo,' 'Spectator,' 'Examiner,' 'Conservative,' 'Scotsman,' 'John Bull,' 'Graphic,' 'Illustrated London News,' 'Liverpool Mercury,' 'New York Daily Tribune' (May 5).—Orr.
1873. 'Penn Monthly' (Philadelphia), Sept. 1873. Article on *Red Cotton Night-Cap Country*. [pp. 657-661, by R. E. T.] This is a high class-American Monthly Magazine emanating from the Pennsylvania University.¹—F. H. E.
1875. *Aristophanes' Apology*: about or after April 12, reviewed in 'Daily News' (leader), 'Liverpool Mercury,' 'Globe,' 'Pictorial World' (and the next week a general appreciative article on R. B. by Mortimer Collins), 'Hour' (April 19), 'Scotsman,' 'World,' 'John Bull,' 'Examiner' (by Edm. W. Gosse; a pretty article), 'Standard,' 'Observer,' 'Nonconformist,' 'Concordia' (by Joseph Knight), 'Manchester Guardian' (June 21), 'Echo,' 'Spectator,' 'Illustrated London News,' 'Pall Mall Gazette.'—Orr.
1875. '*Aristophanes' Apology* . . . resumes the thread of the poem published a few years ago under the title of *Balaustion's Adventure*. In that poem . . . Balaustion, a Rhodian girl, saves her own life and that of the crew of the vessel in which she had taken passage to Athens,—but which had been driven by stress of weather and the pursuit of pirates into the hostile port of Syracuse,—by reciting to the Syracusans, Euripides's play of *Alcestis*. In *Aristophanes' Apology*, Balaustion and her husband, Euthycles, . . . are quitting Athens for Rhodes, after the occupation of the former city by Lysander, at the close of the Peloponnesian War. Balaustion narrates to her husband the story of the death of Euripides, and tells how, on the day of his death, Aristophanes burst into her dwelling at the close of a comic revel, and held long converse with her on his treatment of the dead poet. She tells how she listened patiently to his *Apology*,—which she repeats, together with her own reply, and then, as a final defence of her beloved master, she recites his play of *Hercules*, the manuscript of which, with other relics of his muse, he had given her. Aristophanes, partly convinced by the splendour of the poem, continues his *Apology* in a less triumphant tone, and leaves Balaustion half reconciled to him by his acknowledgment of the loss which Athens had sustained by the death of Euripides.'—'The Times,' Oct. 4, 1875.
1875. *The Inn Album*: about or after Nov. 27, reviewed in the 'Globe,' 'Saturday Review,' 'Leeds Mercury,' 'Daily News,' 'John Bull,' 'Liverpool Mercury,' 'Spectator,' 'Examiner,' 'Standard,' 'Graphic.'—Orr.
1876. Prof. Geddes's Address to his 2nd Greek Class at Aberdeen University, on the opening of the Winter Session, 1876-7: subject "Some Modern Reproductions of Classic Poetry," 'ending with that of one who is perhaps the most notable figure on the poetic horizon of the present day—Robert Browning' . . . 'the

¹ "Mr. Browning's strength lies very greatly in his vast learning, and his imaginative grasp of the characteristics of different times and places and people. Hardly a period of the race's life, from the pre-historic Caliban down to Napoleon III., but has been the subject of his pen; hardly a situation of human life that he has not touched. . . . But Italy and the Renaissance seem to furnish the historical and geographical centres of his imaginative activity. Never in English speech have the two been so finely reproduced and made intelligible. . . . In his last poem, Mr. B. finds his subject in France under the second empire. . . . One chief interest of the poem is its masterly analysis of the paroxysm of religious enthusiasm that at present possesses France, and which is chiefly striking to observers for the absence of any ethical elements in its operations and its effects. . . . the poem is unrelieved by any real nobleness in the actors. . . . And yet Miranda is one of the best drawn of a group of characters that only Browning in modern times has attempted, the self-deceiving, semi-hypocrites; and few passages from his pen surpass the soliloquy that precedes his [*Miranda's*] strange and suicidal leap.

strongest and subtlest, if not the sweetest, poet of our age': A short review of B.'s general characteristics, a longer one of his *Balaustion*, and a notice of *Aristophanes' Apology*. 'Enough has been indicated to show that the Greek muse is still a potential factor even in English literature, and that the strongest of our living poets is a votary at her shrine—(loud cheers).' An Aberdeen paper, probably early in Nov. 1876.—Orr.

1877. *The Agamemnon of Æschylus*: on or after Oct. 22, reviewed in 'Daily News,' 'Liverpool Mercury,' 'World,' 'Standard,' 'May Fair' (noted in 'Academy,' May 10, in review of Morshead's englisht *Agamemnon*), 'Examiner' (R. B. and Morshead: 2 articles), 'Spectator,' 'Guardian' (p. 1623-4), 'John Bull,' 'Nineteenth Century,' 'Notes and Queries,' 'Glasgow News.'—Orr.

1879. *Dramatic Idyls* [First Series]: reviewed in 'The Spectator,' May 31; an 8vo Review, "Mr. Browning's New Poems," by The Editor, p. 269-274; 'Fifeshire Journal,' May 29, by Thomas Bayne; 'John Bull,' May 17; 'Daily Free Press,' April 28; 'Glasgow Herald,' April 28; 'Journal of Education,' p. 128-130; 'Saturday Review,' June 21; 'Edinburgh Courant,' July 26; an 8vo Review (? the Pen), July, p. 117-124, in an article on "Three Small Books by Great Writers"; a Russian Review, 'The Daily New Times,' col. 108-115, 10 Mar. 1879, 11 Tom.; Helen Zimmern, in a German paper; 'The Christian World,' "Ned Bratts and John Bunyan."—Orr.

1859. 'The Wanderer,' by Owen Meredith [the present Lord Lytton]. In the Dedication to J[ohn] F[orster] occur the following lines on Browning.

24.

"And, citing all he said or sung
With praise reserved for bards like him,
Spake of that friend who dwells among
The Apennine, and there hath strung
A harp of Anakim;

25.

"Than whom a mightier master never
Touch'd the deep chords of hidden things;
Nor error did from truth dissever
With keener glance; nor made endeavour
To rise on bolder wings

26.

"In those high regions of the soul
Where Thought itself grows dim with awe."

Note, p. 350. "*King Solomon*. My knowledge of the Rabbinical legend which suggested this poem is one among the many debts I owe to my friend R. B. I hope these lines may remind him of hours which his society rendered precious and delightful to me, and which are among the most pleasant memories of my life."

1880. 'Poets in the Pulpit.' By the Rev. H. R. Haweis, M.A. (Vice-Pres. of the Browning Soc.), London. Sampson, Low & Co. 1880. With Woodbury-type photographs of the Poets treated. Robert Browning, p. 116-143. Foretalk; Browning's Characteristics: including a happy contrast of B.'s *Prospice* and Pope's *Dying Christian to his Soul*. Then, an account of B.'s *Christmas-Eve*. Sketchy, but of worth. p. 121: 'He is chiefly dear to the age as a feeler and thinker; he is also dear because knowing all, and having been racked with its doubts, and stretched upon the mental torture-wheels of its despair; having sounded cynicism and pessimism to their depths . . . he sometimes firmly, and sometimes faintly [!], trusts the larger hope, but always in the last analysis and residuum of thought,—trusts. Coming from such a mind, such a buoyant message this vexed and storm-tossed age will not willingly let die. It clings to Browning . . . Br. is our friend; we take him by the hand; we feel we can trust him; he is equally incapable of lying or cajolery. We say to him . . . you have the insight and sensibility of the poet, the soul of an artist; you pre-

tend to look on, and analyze, and describe, sometimes coldly, even cynically; but you care not if we see the honest, generous face through the thin mask; for in reality you *agonize* over all you do: you know all, and see all; nothing eludes the vigilance of your incisive intellect: and what lies beyond its reach is brought fluttering to your feet by flashes of surprizing (p. 123) intuition. And the faculty for which we prize you most is just this, that you have an inexhaustible interest in human nature; that you love "men and women"; that you believe in the soul and in God. . . (p. 126.) There was never a poet at once so graphic—so capable of painting with a few spots of colour,—and yet so independent of what is graphic and external. *Caliban* is full of an eastern glow of colour, a minute detail and observation of external nature, worthy of a naturalist; but the whole is nothing but a mental drama played out on the lowest level of human intelligence, as *Luria* is a drama played out on the highest. All Browning's poems are nothing but "dramas of the inner life" . . . all save the unseen motives which pass "hither and thither dividing the swift mind," is framework . . . or so much paint, which might be rubbed off, and still leave the contour of his work perfect . . . throughout, one great moral quality emerges . . . the passionate love of truth rather than repose . . . Through all its contradictory writings he *will* know and have the very heart in man and woman. He is a great unweaver; he tears off the mask, tramples the sham underfoot; shows people to themselves and to the world, weighs them in the balance, tries them in the (p. 128) crucible, sets the pure gold in his heart of hearts (forgive the mixt metaphor), and flings the dross passionately to the four winds of heaven. For him no rounded whole, no sham consistency, at the expense of truth. Let us all stand firm, and be judged with all our imperfections on our heads—"nothing extenuate, nor set down aught in malice." In Browning the unattainable is never attained, the ideal is never reached: there is never a perfect saint or villain throughout the whole of his works. Yet is he no pessimist, no real cynic; for the sense of Divine perfection is also never lost; it is the deep undertone of life, amid its wildest discords. He is passionately wedded to this world; everything about it is full of teeming interest for him; and yet the motto he has selected for death rules life—it is the eternal "*Prospice*" or "Beyond."

1880. 'English Literature,' by Stopford Brooke, M.A., 1880. A fine paragraph on R. B. occurs on pages 183-4 under head of 'Modern English Poetry.'—F. H. E.
1880. 'British Quarterly Review,' July 1, p. 235-6. A short notice of Br.'s *Selections*, second series, and of his *Selections* from E. B. B.
1880. *Dramatic Idyls*. Second Series. Reviewed in 'The Standard,' July 8; 'Daily News'; 'Glasgow Evening Citizen,' July 24; 'Pall Mall Gazette,' July 26.—Orr.
1880. 'British Quarterly Review,' Oct. 1. Short notice of '*Dramatic Idyls*. Second Series.' p. 506-7.
1880. 'British Quarterly Review,' Oct. 1. 'Art. I. Tennyson's Poems,' p. 273-291. A keen but somewhat unsympathetic critical review of Tennyson, contrasting him in several points with "his great rival, Mr. Browning." On p. 275, "The great poets who present the most difficulty are loved by their students with a passion often in proportion to the difficulty with which they are approached; and those students can never for a moment believe that the more popular poet is worthy to stand beside their own chosen one. *Æschylus* and *Æuripides*, *Dante* and *Tasso*, *Wordsworth* and *Scott*, *Browning* and *Tennyson*, are instances of the contrast we mean: the first of each pair is incomparably the higher poet; but the multitude who read for relaxation and not for study, for facile delight and not for wise counsel, for titillation of fancy and not for the calm satisfaction of intellect, will never believe it, nor are they able to understand or apprehend it." p. 275-7 discuss the ease of Tennyson, and contrast the difficulty of Br. Take Mr. Browning in "Fear death?—to feel the fog in my throat," &c. [*Prospice*]. p. 277, "To put this highly elliptical passage into prose would need no mere transposition of words, but a paraphrase; it requires and repays study; but the students are to the readers of poetry as, perhaps, one in a hundred." p. 279, "We may instance the use of older material by Mr. Browning in his

Dramatic Idyls. It was at once pointed out by many critics, that 'Halbert and Hob' is the expansion of a few lines in Aristotle's *Ethics*; and the first incident of *Ivan Icanovitch* is a story told wherever Russian life and Russian wolves are named. The true artist has seized the principle only of Aristotle's story, and given it a special English and puritan interest; while in the sequel to the poor [Russian] mother's tale, he rises to the rank of the creator, the original poetic genius." p. 284, "Mr. Tennyson's . . . fastidious taste has preserved him from all temptation to *tours de force*, to surprises exciting now and then our admiration, now and then our anger. There is nothing half so clever as Browning's *Le Byron de nos jours*, with its quaint double rhymes, its metre and rhythm, apart from anything which had ever been done before. There are no deliberate roughnesses before or after passages of sweet sound, as though to point the contrast; no astonishing rhymes as in Browning and his sweet and strong poet-wife." p. 286, "Mr. Browning . . . is suffused and penetrated with his subject, is for the time a lawyer, or follows every tortuous winding of the character he analyzes, as a surgeon lays bare nerves with his scalpel." p. 288, "Mr. Tennyson . . . is in no sense dramatic. His great rival, Mr. Browning, has a marvellous power of placing himself in the position of his heroes. Bishop Blougram, Sludge, Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau live before us scarce less vividly as real persons than do Hamlet or Macbeth. It is true they all express themselves in the words of Browning, and that those words have a marked idiosyncrasy, but the characters are defined; there is no confusion of persons, nor do we think for a moment that in any of his creations the poet is reproducing himself. In other words, he is truly dramatic . . . Who can find Mr. Browning in his *Dramatic Idyls*, in his *Men and Women*?"

1881. A. P. Paton. Hamnet Shakspeare. Part VII. *Julius Caesar*. p. xiv. "It will be well for Robert Browning, the other Shakspeare of a hundred years after this, if the editing of his Collected Works falls into the hands of men as painstaking as Heminge and Condell were . . . He has, indeed, already begun to suffer, and . . . he must wince not a little, to observe the changes his scrupulously-finished work occasionally undergoes. In the brief extracts in two of the reviews of *La Saisiaz* there were . . . 'stimulated thunderclaps' for 'simulated thunderclaps'; 'here fame stopped' for 'there fame stopped'; 'with my lyre lowest, highest,' instead of 'at lowest, highest,' and so on." . . .

1881. *Sordello: A Story from Robert Browning*, by Frederic May Holland, author of the 'Reign of the Stoics.' New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1881. p. 1-26. Tells the story of the poem, with a few extracts from it; gives 5 or 6 pages of critical notes, and states the historical basis of the work, with an enlight specimen of the real *Sordello's* poetry. Mr. Holland has also in MS. like stories from *The Ring and the Book*, *Luria*, *A Blot in the 'Scutcheon*, *The Return of the Druses*, *Colombe's Birthday*, *Pippa Passes*, *Red-Cotton Night-Cap Country*, and *Balaustion's Adventures*, including the *Apology of Aristophanes*. George Bell & Sons, York St., Covent Garden, will publish these '*Stories from Browning*' soon.

1881, Oct. 28. First Meeting of the Browning Society: full 300 folk at it. Reports of it in the 'Daily News' and 'Echo' of Oct. 29, 'Literary World' of Nov. 4 (by Dr. P. Bayne), and 'Academy' of Nov. 5 (by Miss Hickey). Comment on it in the 'Passing Notes' of 'The Echo,' Oct. 29, and my answer to this in 'Echo,' Oct. 31.

1881. Lord Lytton (II) in 'Contemporary Review,' Nov. p. 763-5. R. B. is the X who contends that *The Love Sonnets of Proteus* reviewed by Lord L. are not 'Sonnets' in form, and have therefore no right to that name. Of R. B., Lord L. says: "X. is one of those rare poets whose inimitable genius belongs to no school; and he is now in the full enjoyment of a long-merited renown. Like many other genuine writers, he is not much indebted to the critics for his fame. It was not they who introduced him to the public. The public has introduced him to them." . . .

1881. Nov. 11. Preliminary Meeting of the *Cambridge Browning Society*, in King's Combination Room, the Rev. Prof. Westcott in the Chair. Addresses by him and Dr. Chas. Waldstein. A Committee of ten appointed to draw up the Rules of, and organize the Society. See *Academy*, Nov. 5 and 26.

1881. Nov. 9, First Circular. Nov. 22, List of Members (40,¹ besides 8 Hon. Members) and Rules of the *Oxford Browning Society*, at its First Meeting held in Balliol Common Room, A. C. Bradley of Balliol in the Chair. Paper read by the Rev. the Hon. Arthur Lyttelton, on the leading ideas of Browning's Poetry. Second Meeting, Dec. 6: Mr. Lyttelton in the Chair. Paper on Browning's Critics, by Mr. Paton Ker. Mr. S. L. Lee of Balliol is the Hon. Sec. See *Academy*, Dec. 3.
1881. 'Gentleman's Magazine,' Dec. (No. 1812, vol. 251), p. 682-695. Review of *The Ring and the Book*, by James Thomson of our Society's Committee, another of 'The City of Dreadful Night,' &c.; highly praising B.'s wonderful creation, likening it to a Gothic cathedral (see p. 141 *abuv*), with its gargoyles of the Lawyers' arguments, justifying its many tellings of the story, &c.
- 1881, Dec. 1. Scribner's 'Century Magazine,' p. 189-200: two portraits, and an Article by Mr. E. W. Gosse on "The Early Writings of Mr. Robert Browning:" an important article, as all the information came from the poet himself. It states that Br. began to write poetry as a very little boy; at 12 had enough Byronian poems to form a volume, but could naturally get no one to publish them: Miss Sarah Flower showed them to W. J. Fox, and after Fox's death in 1864, his daughter gave back to Br. his youthful productions. About 1825, Br. got all Shelley's works, and Keats's, and they changed him. "He plann'd a series of monodramatic epics, narratives of the life of typical souls—a gigantic scheme," of which *Pauline* only remains. His aunt gave him the money to print *Pauline*. Dante Rossetti so admired this poem that he copied it all out, and afterwards wrote to Br. at Florence about it. Br.'s father paid for the printing of *Paracelsus*. At Fox's house on Nov. 27, 1835, Br. made Macready's acquaintance; and at Macready's house, on Dec. 31, 1835 and Jan. 1, 1836, Jn. Forster's. Macready suggested that Br. should write him a play, "and the subject of Narses, the eunuch who conquer'd Italy for Justinian," was discuss'd between them. At Talfourd's *Ion* dinner, May 26, 1836 (p. 109 *abuv*), 'Wordsworth, leaning across the table, said, with august affability, "I am proud to drink your health, Mr. Browning."' On leaving Talfourd's, Macready said, "Write a play, Browning, and keep me from going to America!..." Mr. Br. simply replied: "Shall it be historical and English? What do you say to a drama on Strafford?" This was publish'd by Longmans, at their own cost. Before 1840, Br. wrote *K. Victor and K. Charles*, and *Mansur the Hierophant*, rebaptized on publication by the name of *The Return of the Druses*. *Sordello* was begun in 1838 [?], finish'd and printed in 1840. Moxon the publisher suggested that Br. should print his poems in M.'s cheap series of old dramatists, &c., and so 8 nos. of *Bells and Pomegranates* came out in it. *Dramatic Lyrics I.* being too short, the printer's devil came for more copy, and Br. "gave him a *jeu d'esprit* which he had written for Willie Macready [see p. 45, *abuv*, note], and which he had had no idea of publishing. This was *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, which has probably introduced its author's name into hundreds of thousands of homes where otherwise it never would have penetrated." The full story is then told of Macready's manœuvres, first to get out of having the *Blot* play'd, as he had promist, and then to take the hero's part out of Phelps's hands. Macready was nearly bankrupt, and hardly himself. (B. wouldn't let me give these details before.) Mr. Gosse's article should be bought by all our Members.
1881. 'Fanfulla della Domenica,' 4 dicembre. Roma. 'Agli ammiratori del poeta di *Men and Women*. Notizie preziose che raccolgo dall' *Academy*.' A note of the foundation of the Browning Society, of the *Century* article, and of Mr. Radford's identification of the *Andrea del Sarto* picture and poem, with my letter about it (p. 148, below). The result is prettily put: "Così il mondo dell' arte ebbe due fortune; di avere una copia di meno, e un capolavoro di più."²

¹ The Society was limited in order that it might meet in the comfortable Common-Room of the College of the Chairman and Host of each Meeting. But the 40 (the number of the French Academy as well as the Forty Thieves) represent all classes of the University—15 Graduates, 15 Undergraduates, and 10 ladies.

² Thus had the world of Art two good haps; to have one copy the less, and one master-piece the more.

1881. 'The Cambridge Review,' Dec. 7, vol. iii. No. 58, p. 146-7. "Robert Browning's Poems." A good review of *Rabbi ben Ezra* and *Abt Vogler*, by A. W., who also writes some thoughtful verses, "Unfulfilled Ideals," in the next column. On p. 119, are letters from R. Somervell of Kings, and E. M. Sympton of Caius, ridiculing a note of some feeble 'B. H. H.' against the Cambr. Browning Society in a former number of the 'Review.'
1881. 'Academy,' Dec. 10, p. 437, col. 2. Letter from me in answer to Mr. Gosse's objection to *Paracelsus*, as "a drama" (which Browning expressly warned his readers it wasn't) containing 2 speeches of over 300 lines each.
- 1881, Dec. Expressions of hope that Mrs. Kendal will play the Queen in *In a Balcony*, by Mr. Joseph Knight in 'Athenæum,' Dec. 10, Mr. Moy Thomas in 'Daily News,' Dec. 12, Mr. F. Wedmore in 'Academy,' Dec. 17.
1881. 'The Home Journal,' Dec. 15, p. 104-5. Garbled report of my Lecture on Br. to the Ascham Society on Dec. 7.
1881. 'Academy,' Dec. 17. Miss E. Dickinson West's Sonnet 'To Robert Browning, on re-reading some Poems long unread.'
1881. 'Pall Mall Gazette,' Dec. 22, p. 11. Article on 'The Browning Society.' My answer to it, meeting its objections full butt, is—with an editorial paragraph—in the 'P. M. G.' of Jan. 2, 1882. (I did not see the article till Dec. 30, 1881.)
1881. 'Daily News,' Dec. 31. Leader on the Literature of the year, mentioning Br. and the Browning Society. My answer is in the 'D. N.' of Jan. 2, 1882, p. 2, col. 7, at foot.
1881. 'Academy,' Dec. 31. My letter on 'Mr. Browning's Thunderstorms,'—Ottima's in *Pippa Passes*, and the Pope's in *Ring and Book*, vol. iv, p. 91-2,—asking whether they can be matcht in English Literature.
- I have not enterd the smaller Browning paragraphs or earlier letters of mine that have appeared weekly in the 'Academy' for some time.
1882. Prof. S. R. Gardiner. 'Fall of the Monarchy of Charles I,' vol. ii, p. 180. "Strafford turns proudly away. Noy wishes to know where he will choose his residence. 'In any place,' is the reply, 'so that I may have that which I come for—rest.' Such was the utmost for which a contemporary could dare to hope. A great poet of our own day, clothing the reconciling spirit of the 19th century in words which never could have been spoken in the 17th, has breathed a higher wish. On his page an imaginary Pym, recalling an imaginary friendship, looks forward hopefully to a re-union in a better and brighter world. 'Even thus,' Pym is made to say—and we may well wish that it had been possible for him to say it—

'Even thus, I love him now,
And look for my chief portion in that world
Where great hearts led astray are turn'd again . . .
 in my inmost heart,
Believe, I think of stealing quite away,
To walk once more with Wentworth, my youth's friend,
Purged from all errors, gloriously renew'd;
And Eliot shall not blame us.'

Browning's *Strafford*, Act V. sc. ii. *Works*, 1868, i. 308."

1882. 'Literary Gazette' (Boston, U.S.A.), Jan. 14. Notice of Browning's growing popularity.
1882. P. G. Hamerton. Dedication of his book, 'The Graphic Arts,' to R. B.
1882. 'Boston (U. S. A.) Evening Transcript,' Wednesday, Jan. 18, p. 4, col. 4-5. An article headed "Mr. Thaxter's readings—A new Interpreter of Browning," very strongly praising the readings and the poet: "The mind which easily overtakes Shakspeare will find Browning still many strides in advance. Those who honestly wish to ascend the heights and breathe the same fine air with this noblest poetic mind of our century, will hardly find a more careful and gentle leader than Mr. Thaxter." *ib.*, col. 5. Letter protesting against Mr. Home being the original of *Studge*, the Medium.

3. FRESH PERSONAL NOTICES.

1835—1843. MACREADY'S JOURNAL, NOTES ON BROWNING.

1835. *November 27th.* Went from chambers to dine with Rev. William Fox, Bayswater . . . Mr. *Robert Browning*, the author of *Paracelsus* came in after dinner: I was very much pleased to meet him. His face is full of intelligence. My time passed most agreeably . . . I took Mr. Browning on, and requested to be allowed to improve my acquaintance with him. He expressed himself warmly, as gratified by the proposal, wished to send me his book; we exchanged cards and parted. 1875. Macready's 'Reminiscences,' ed. Pollock, i. 474.
- December 7th.* Read *Paracelsus*, a work of great daring, starred with poetry of thought, feeling, and diction, but occasionally obscure: the writer can scarcely fail to be a leading spirit of his time. i. 474-5.
- December 31st.* Frederick Reynolds arrived a little after 4 o'clock. . . Our other guests were Messrs Kenney, Forster, Cattermole, *Browning*, and Mr. Munro. Mr. *Browning* was very popular with the whole party; his simple and enthusiastic manner engaged attention, and won opinions from all present; he looks and speaks more like a youthful poet than any man I ever saw. We poured out a libation as a farewell to the old year and a welcome to the new. i. 476.
1836. *February 16th.* Forster and Browning called, and talked over the plot of a tragedy, which Browning had begun to think of: the subject Narses. He said that I had *bit* him by my performance of 'Othello,' and I told him 'I hoped I should make the blood come.' It would indeed be some recompense for the miseries, the humiliations, the heart-sickening disgusts which I have endured in my profession if, by its exercise, I had awakened a spirit of poetry whose influence would elevate, ennoble, and adorn our degraded drama. May it be! ii. 8. (See Gosse's article in *Scribner's Century*, Dec. 1881, p. 194-5.)
- May 26th.* [After first acting of Talfourd's 'Ion.'] 'Smith, Dow, *Browning*, Forster . . . came into my room. [M. went to supper at Talfourd's: See *Bibliography*, p. 109.] At Talfourd's I met Wordsworth, who pinned me, Walter Savage Landor . . . Stanfield, *Browning*, Price, Miss Mitford—I cannot remember all. [M. proposed Talfourd's health.] It became then a succession of personal toasts, Miss E. Tree, Miss Mitford, Mr. Stanfield, Mr. Price, Mr. Poole, *Browning*, and who else I do not know. I was very happily placed between Wordsworth and Landor, with Browning opposite, and Mr. Talfourd next but one.' . . ii. 33.
- London, August 1st.* Came up to town [from Elstree, Herts.] by *Billing's*, in company with Mr. and Miss Lane, *Browning*, Forster, and Mr. Ainsworth. Parted with my guests apparently well-pleased with their excursion. . . ii. 42.
- London, August 3rd.* Forster told me that Browning had fixed on *Strafford* for the subject of a tragedy; he could not have hit upon one that I could have more readily concurred to. ii. 43-4.
- Elstree, Sunday, October 30th.* We talked in the drawing-room with Browning and Dow, till the arrival of Talfourd and Mr. R. T. Price and White. Introduced all to Forster. i. 53.
- November 10th.* Browning came with Dow to bring me his tragedy of *Strafford*; the fourth act was incomplete. I requested him to write-in the plot of what was deficient. Dow drove me (p. 54) to the Garrick Club, while Browning wrote out the story of the omitted parts. [M. stayed with the remainders after the dinner given to Forster.] Browning and Dow soon summoned me, and I received the MS, started in a cab to Kilburn. . . ii. 54.
1837. *January 4th.* Acted *Bragelone* well (in L. Bulwer's 'La Vallière'). Dow, Fitzgerald, *Browning*, Talfourd . . . came into my room; they all seemed to think much of my performance. . . ii. 57.
- January 7th.* Browning called, and we talked about 'La Vallière,' &c.; he gave me an interesting lithographic print of Richard from some old tapestry. . . ii. 57.

Elstree, March 18th. Received a note from Forster, appointing Monday for the visit of himself and Browning about *Strafford*. I answered him, assenting to his proposal. ii. 63. Read before dinner a few pages of *Paracelsus*, which raises my wonder the more I read it. ii. 64.

March 30th. I went to the theatre . . . and read to Mr. Osbaldiston the play of *Strafford*; he caught at it with avidity, agreed to produce it without delay on his part, and to give the author £12 per night for twenty-five nights, and £10 per night for ten nights beyond. He also promised to offer Mr. Elton an engagement to strengthen the play. ii. 66.

April 4th. Browning called in with alterations, &c., sat and talked whilst I dined. A young gentleman came in . . . to request my autograph in his album. I introduced Browning to him as a great tragic poet, and he added his name. ii. 66.

April 27th. Gave the evening to the perusal and study of *Strafford*.

April 28th. Thought over some scenes of *Strafford*, before I rose, and went out very soon to the rehearsal of it. There is no chance, in my opinion, for the play, but in the acting, which by possibility might carry it to the end without disapprobation; but that the curtain can fall without considerable opposition, I cannot venture to anticipate under the most advantageous circumstances. In all the historical plays of Shakspeare, the great poet has only introduced such events as act on the individuals concerned, and of which they are themselves a part; the persons are all in direct relation to each other, and the facts are present to the audience. But in Browning's play, we have a long scene of passion—upon what? A plan destroyed, by whom or for what we know not, and a parliament dissolved, which merely seems to inconvenience *Strafford* in his arrangements.

April 29th. Brewster called with my wig for *Strafford*.

May 1st. Called at the box-office about the boxes and places for which I had been applied to. Rehearsed *Strafford*. Was gratified with the extreme delight Browning testified at the rehearsal of my part, which he said was to him a full recompense for having written the play, inasmuch as he had seen his utmost hopes of character perfectly embodied.

Read *Strafford* in bed, and acted it as well as I could under the nervous sensations that I experienced. Edward (the novelist) and Henry (the diplomatist) Bulwer, Fitzgerald, Talfourd, Forster, Dow, Browning (who brought his father to shake hands with me), and Jerdan came into my room. ii. 67. (See further, p. 71, 106, 133, 137, 145, 148, 183, Browning goes into Macready's room, &c., after divers 'first nights'; p. 98 (Jan. 20, 1838), p. 141 (March 27, 1839), p. 181 (Aug. 4, 1841), p. 196 (at Kenyon's, March 26, 1842), p. 199; dines with or calls on him; p. 104, meets B. at Miss Martineau's party, March 14, '38; B. comes to his reading of Bulwer's 'Richelieu' (Dec. 16, '38, p. 131).

1840. *May 8th.* Attended Carlyle's lecture 'The Hero as a Prophet: Mahomet': on which he descanted with a fervour and eloquence that only a conviction of truth could give. I was charmed, carried away by him. Met Browning there.

1843. *February 4th.* Rehearsed Browning's play, *The Blot on the 'Scutcheon*.

— *6th.* Mr. Phelps was too ill to play to-night. I decided on under-studying his part in Browning's play. (See *Scribner's Century*, Dec. 1881, p. 198-9.)

February 11th. Production of the play of *The Blot on the 'Scutcheon*.

1842-1851. R. H. Stoddard and BAYARD TAYLOR on Browning and his Wife. Mrs. Browning on her boy. From 'Letters of Eliz. B. Browning to R. H. Horne. With a Preface and Memoir by Richard Henry Stoddard.' New York: Miller, 1877. Vol. i. p. xix. Among other modern poets mentioned by her [Miss Barrett] in 'Lady Geraldine's Courtship' was Mr. Robert Browning, whose series of poems and plays *Bells and Pomegranates*, was then in publication. The lines in which she referred to him and his works were as follows:

"Or from Browning some 'Pomegranate' which, if cut deep down the middle,
Shows a heart within blood-tinctured, of a veined humanity."

[Here follows a wrong account of Browning's introduction to Miss Barrett. This was in fact made by her cousin Mr. Kenyon, her father's schoolfellow, after the poet and poetess had corresponded for some months.]

- p. xx. Soon there were two poets of that name, Mr. Robert Browning, author of *Bells and Pomegranates*, and Mrs. Elizabeth Barrett Browning, author of 'Lady Geraldine's Courtship,' which proved a poetic prefiguration of her own. . . [Their] marriage . . . followed in the autumn of 1846 . . . [and they went] away to Italy. They settled at Florence in Casa Guidi, fit dwelling for poets. It has often¹ been described, especially the room in which Mrs. Browning received her friends. Cosy, comfortable, elegant, it was a kind of ideal chamber, neither a library, nor a parlor, but a happy blending of both. There were old pictures on the walls in old frames: easy-chairs and lounges were scattered about, and along the walls (p. xxi.) were large carved book-cases crammed with books in many languages, Greek, be sure, being among them. Dispose these as picturesquely as possible, and add to them innumerable little trifles, objects of art, bric-a-brac, &c., and you may have a dim idea of the room in which Mrs. Browning wrote her poems. The contrast between it and her old sick-chamber in Wimpole Street was as great as the contrast between her life as a maiden, and her life as a wife. . . .
- p. xxiii. The Brownings spent their summers in Florence, and their winters in Rome, and occasionally visited England. . . Mr. Bayard Taylor, who was in London at this time [1851], met the mated poets, as he has told us in 'At Home and Abroad' [I. Series, 1859: II. 1862, neither in Brit. Mus. Oct. 27, 1881], a collection of pleasant sketches of life, scenery, and men. "Calling one afternoon in September, at their residence in Devonshire Street," he writes, "I was fortunate enough to find both at home, though on the eve of their return to Florence. In a small drawing-room on the first floor I met Browning, who received me with great cordiality. In his lively, cheerful manner, quick voice, and perfect self-possession, he made the impression of an American rather than an Englishman. He was then, I should judge, about 37 [39] years of age, but his dark hair was already streaked with gray about the temples. His complexion was fair, with perhaps the faintest olive tinge, eyes large, clear, and

¹ As one instance, take this from W. W. Storey's "touching and appreciative letter" in the 'Atlantic Monthly,' Sept. 1861, dated Florence, July 5, 1861, and partly reprinted in the very interesting Memoir of E. B. B., prefix to the American edition of her *Poetical Works*, 2 vols. in 1, Jas. Miller, 779 Broadway, New York, p. 13-14:—"Those who have known Casa Guidi as it was, could hardly enter the loved rooms now, and speak above a whisper. They who have been so favored, can never forget the square anteroom, with its great picture and piano-forte, at which the boy Browning passed many an hour—the little dining-room covered with tapestry, and where hung medallions of Tennyson, Carlyle, and Robert Browning—the long room filled with plaster casts and studies, which was Mr. Browning's retreat,—and, dearest of all, the large drawing-room where *she* always sat. It opens upon a balcony filled with plants, and looks out upon the iron gray church of Santa Felice. There was something about this room that seemed to make it a proper and especial haunt for poets. The dark shadows and subdued light gave it a dreary look, which was enhanced by the tapestry-covered walls and the old pictures of saints that looked out sadly from their carved frames of black wood. Large book-cases, constructed of specimens of Florentine carving selected by Mr. Browning, were brimming over with wise-looking books. Tables were covered with more gayly bound volumes, the gifts of brother authors. Dante's grave profile, a cast of Keats's face and brow taken after death, a pen-and-ink sketch of Tennyson, the genial face of John Kenyon, Mrs. Browning's good friend and relative, little paintings of the boy Browning, all attracted the eye in turn, and gave rise to a thousand musings. A quaint mirror, easy-chairs and sofas, and a hundred nothings that always add an indescribable charm, were all massed in this room. But the glory of all, and that which sanctified all, was seated in a low arm-chair near the door. A small table, strewn with writing-materials, books, and newspapers, was always by her side." After her death, her husband had a careful water-colour drawing made of this room, which has been engrav'd more than once. It still hangs in his drawing-room, where the mirror and one of the quaint chairs above-named still are. The low arm-chair and small table are in Browning's study—with his father's desk, on which he has written all his poems.

gray, nose strong and well cut, mouth full and rather broad, and chin pointed though not prominent. His forehead broadened rapidly upwards from the outer angle of the eyes, slightly retreating. The strong individuality which marks his poetry was expressed, not only in his face and head, but in his whole demeanor. He was about the medium height, strong in the shoulders, but slender at the waist, and his movements expressed a combination of vigor and elasticity." [Mr. Kenyon the poet cold, and when he went, B. cold him "Kenyon the Magnificent."] B.'s (p. xxv.) eulogy was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Browning, whom he ran to meet with a boyish liveliness. She was slight and fragile in appearance, with a pale, wasted face, shaded by masses of soft chestnut curls which fell on her cheeks, and serious eyes of bluish-gray. Her frame seemed to be altogether disproportionate to her soul. This at least was the first impression: (p. xxvi.) her personality, frail as it appeared, soon exercised its power, and it seemed a natural thing that she should have written the 'Cry of the Children,' or the 'Lady Geraldine's Courtship.' I also understood how these two poets, so different both intellectually and physically, should have found their complements in each other.

"The fortunate balance of their reciprocal qualities makes them an exception to the rule that the inter-marriage of authors is unadvisable, and they appear to be—and are—perfectly happy in their wedded life." [Stoddard. The Brownings expressed great satisfaction with their American reputation, and the conversation taking a turn that led to American Art, Mrs. Browning expressed the belief that a Republican form of government was unfavourable to the Fine Arts. Mr. Taylor dissented to [from] this opinion, and a general historical discussion ensued, which was carried on for some time with the greatest spirit, husband and wife taking directly opposite views. When the good-humoured discussion ended, the third Browning mentioned by Miss Mitford appeared.] "Their child, a blue-eyed, golden-haired boy of two years old, was brought into the room. He stammered Italian sentences only; he knew nothing, as yet, of his native tongue. He has since exhibited a remarkable genius for music and drawing—a fortunate circumstance, for inherited genius is always fresher and more vigorous when it seeks a new form of expression." [Mr. Taylor pursued his journey to the East, and the Brownings returned to Florence, which they made their permanent home, though they visited England from time to time.]

Then Stoddard prints the letters (1st from R. B., 2nd from E. B. B. about her boy's illness) to Leigh Hunt, on Oct. 6, 1857 from Bagui di Lucca, from L. H.'s Correspondence 1862.

1858. N. HAWTHORNE on Browning and his Wife and Boy. "Passages from the French and Italian Note-Books of NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE." Strahan & Co., London, 1871. Vol. i. end, p. 371. "Mr. Powers [the sculptor] took his leave about 8 o'clock, being to make a call on . . . Mrs. Browning at Casa Guidi" . . . Vol. ii. p. 9. "As we were at dinner to-day [June 8th, 1858] at half-past three, there was a ring at the door, and a minute after our [p. 10] servant brought a card. It was Mr. Robert Browning's, and on it was written in pencil an invitation for us to go to see them this evening. He had left the card, and gone away; but very soon the bell rang again, and he had come back, having forgotten to give his address. This time he came in; and he shook hands with all of us, children and grown people, and was very vivacious and agreeable. He looked younger and even handsomer than when I saw him in London, two years ago, and his grey hairs seemed fewer than those that had then strayed into his youthful head. He talked a wonderful quantity in a little time, and told us—among other things that we should never have dreamed of—that Italian people will not cheat you, if you construe them generously and put them upon their honour.

"Mr. Browning was very kind and warm in his expressions of pleasure at seeing us; and, on our part, we were all very glad to meet him. He must be an exceedingly likeable man. . . . They are to leave Florence very soon, and are going to Normandy, I think he said, for the rest of the summer. . . .

June 9th. "We went last evening, at 8 o'clock, to see the Brownings; and, after some search and [p. 11] inquiry, we found the Casa Guidi, which is a palace

in a street not very far from our own. It being dusk, I could not see the exterior, which, if I remember, Browning has celebrated in song; at all events, Mrs. Browning has called one of her poems 'Casa Guidi Windows.'

"The street is a narrow one; but on entering the palace we found a spacious staircase and ample accommodations of vestibule and hall, the latter opening on a balcony, where we could hear the chanting of priests in a church close by. Browning told us that this was the first church where an oratorio had ever been performed. He came into the ante-room to greet us, as did his little boy [then 94] Robert, whom they call 'Pennini' [later, 'Pen'] for fondness. The latter cognomen is a diminutive of Apennino, which was bestowed upon him at his first advent into the world because he was so very small, there being a statue in Florence of colossal size called 'Apennino.' He was born in Florence, and prides himself on being a Florentine, and is indeed as un-English a production as if he were native of another planet.

"Mrs. Browning met us at the door of the drawing-room, and greeted us most kindly—a pale, small person, scarcely embodied at all; at any rate, only [p. 12] substantial enough to put forth her slender fingers to be grasped, and to speak with a shrill, yet sweet, tenuity of voice. Really, I do not see how Mr. Browning can suppose that he has an earthly wife any more than an earthly child; both are of the elfin race, and will flit away from him some day when he least thinks of it. She is a good and kind fairy, however, and sweetly disposed towards the human race, though only remotely akin to it. It is wonderful to see how small she is, how pale her cheek, how bright and dark her eyes. There is not such another figure in the world; and her black ringlets cluster down into her neck, and make her face look the whiter by their sable profusion. I could not form any judgment about her age [49]; it may range anywhere within the limits of human life or elfin life. When I met her at London at Lord Houghton's breakfast-table she did not impress me so singularly; for the morning light is more prosaic than the dim illumination of their great tapestried drawing-room; and besides, sitting next to her, she did not have occasion to raise her voice in speaking, and I was not sensible what a slender voice she has. It is marvellous to see how so extraordinary, so acute, so sensitive a creature can impress us, as she does [p. 13], with the certainty of her benevolence. It seems to me there were a million chances to one that she would have been a miracle of acidity and bitterness.

"We were not the only guests. . . Mr. Browning was very efficient in keeping up conversation with everybody, and seemed to be in all parts of the room, and in every group at the same moment; a most vivid and quick-thoughted person—logical and common-sensible, as, I presume, poets generally are in their daily talk. . . .

"We had some tea and strawberries, and passed a pleasant evening. There was no very noteworthy conversation; the most interesting topic (p. 14) being that disagreeable and now wearisome one of spiritual communications, as regards which, Mrs. Browning is a believer, and her husband an infidel. . . Browning and his wife had both been present at a spiritual session held by Mr. Hume, and had seen and felt the unearthly hands, one of which had placed a laurel wreath on Mrs. Browning's head. Browning, however, avowed his belief that those hands were affixed to the feet of Mr. Hume, who lay extended in his chair, with his legs far under the table. The marvellousness of the fact, as I have read of it, and heard it from other eye-witnesses, melted strangely away in his hearty gripe, and at the sharp touch of his logic [cp. *Mr. Sludge the Medium*]; while his wife, ever and anon, put in a little gentle word of expostulation. I am rather surprised that Browning's conversation should be so clear, and so much to the purpose at the moment, since his poetry can seldom proceed far without running into the high grass of latent meanings and obscure allusions.

"Mrs. Browning's health does not permit late hours, so we began to take leave about ten o'clock. . .

(p. 15). "Little Pennini, during the evening, sometimes helped the guests to cake and strawberries; joined in the conversation, when he had anything to say, or sat down upon a couch to enjoy his own meditations. He has long curling hair, and has not yet emerged from his frock and short hose. It is funny to

think (p. 16) of putting him into trousers. His likeness to his mother is strange to behold."

- ii. 365. 1860. London, May 17th [from a Letter]. . . "To-day I met at breakfast Mr. Field Talfourd, who promises (p. 366) to send you the photograph of his portrait of Mr. Browning."

June 27 . . . (p. 66). Last evening we went to pass the evening with Miss Blagden [p. 111 above, 1873] who inhabits a villa at Bellosguardo, about a mile outside the walls . . . (p. 67). By-and-by came Mr. Browning, Mr. Trollope . . .

Browning was very genial and full of life, as usual, but his conversation has the effervescent aroma which you cannot catch even if you get the very words that seem to be imbued with it. He spoke most rapturously of a portrait of Mrs. Browning, which an Italian artist is painting for the wife of an American gentleman, as a present from her husband¹. The success was already perfect, although there had been only two sittings as yet, and both on the same day; and in this relation, Mr. Browning remarked that P—, the American artist, had had no less than seventy-three sittings of him for a portrait. In the result, every hair and speck of him was represented; yet, as I inferred from what he did not say, this accumulation of minute truths did not, after all, amount to the true whole.

I do not remember much else that Br. said, except a playful abuse of a little King Charles' spaniel, named Frolic, Miss Blagden's lap-dog, whose venerable age (he is eleven years old) ought to have pleaded in his behalf. Browning's nonsense is of very genuine and excellent quality, the true babble and effervescence of a bright and powerful mind; and he lets it play among his friends with the faith and simplicity of a child. He must be an amiable man. I should like him much, and should make him like me, if opportunities were favourable.

p. 97. July 8th. On the 6th we went to the church of the Annunziata, which stands in the piazza of the same name. On the corner of the Via dei Servi is the palace which I suppose to be the one that Browning makes the scene of his poem *The Statue and the Rust* [no. 73], and the statue of Duke Ferdinand sits stately on horseback, with his face turned towards the window, where the lady ought to appear. Neither she nor the bust, however, was visible, at least not to my eyes. [The Bust was Browning's invention.]

1866. Kate Field, in the 'Atlantic Monthly,' May, 1866, vol. 17, 'Last Days of Walter Savage Landor,' has 3 notices of Browning:—

p. 543. At the time a subscription was opened in Florence to aid Garibaldi's Sicilian expedition, Landor, [poor, but] anxious to lay an offering at the feet (p. 544) of his heart's hero, pulled out his watch, the only article of value about him, and begged Mr. Browning to present it to the fund. Mr. Browning took it; but knowing how lost the old man would be without his timepiece, kept it for a few days; and then, seizing a favourable moment when Landor was missing his watch greatly, though without murmuring, Mr. B. persuaded him to retain it. This he did, with reluctance, after being assured of the fund's prosperous condition.

p. 693. Landor had an inherent objection to having his likeness taken either by man or the sun. Not long before the artist's visit, Mr. Browning had persuaded him to sit for his photograph; but no less a person could have induced the old man to mount the numberless steps which seem to be a necessary condition of photography. This sitting was most satisfactory: and to Mr. Browning's zealous friendship is due the likeness by which the octogenarian (p. 694) Landor will probably be known to the world.

p. 695. Apropos of old songs, Landor has laid his offering upon their neglected altar. I shall not forget that evening at Casa Guidi—I can forget no evening passed there—when, just as the tea was being placed upon the table, Robert Browning turned to Landor, who was that night's honored guest, gracefully thanked him for his defence of old songs, and opening the 'Last Fruit'

¹ After the wife's death, the husband sent the picture to Browning, and it now hangs in his dining-room.

[one of his latest works], read in his clear manly voice the following passages from the Idyls of Theocritus: "We often hear that such and such a thing 'is not worth an old song.' Alas! how very few things are! What precious recollections do some of them awaken! what pleasurable tears do they excite!" ... "Ah, you are kind," replied the gratified author. "You always find out the best bits in my books." *I have never seen anything of its kind so chivalric as the deference paid by Robert Browning to Walter Savage Landor. It was loyal homage rendered by a poet in all the glow of power and impulsive magnetism to an "old master."* (Mr. J. Dykes Campbell kindly gave me the references.)

1867. March 1. Bp. Thirlwall, in 'Letters to a Friend,' 1881, ii. p. 98-9. "One of the persons I met last night was the poet Browning. I was amused to find that he has a pet owl, who is inseparable from him. He gave a very entertaining description of his struggles to reach his own house after dining out on the night when every street in London was a sheet of the smoothest ice, and only four cabs, as the drivers asserted, in circulation."

1881. 'Landor,' by Sidney Colvin, M.A. Macmillan and Co., (one of Jn. Morley's 'English Men of Letters.') p. vi. "To Mr. Robert Browning in particular my thanks are due for his great kindness in allowing me to make use of the collection of books and manuscripts left him by Landor, including Landor's own annotated copies of some of his rarest writings, and a considerable body of his occasional jottings and correspondence." See too p. 4, p. 187-8, p. 209, for how Landor, when he left his family, went to Browning, and how the latter got him an allowance from his brothers and cared for him: "To Mr. Br.'s respectful and judicious guidance, Landor showed himself docile from the first"; p. 211. "The death of Mrs. Br. in 1861, and her husband's consequent departure for England, took away from him (L.) his best friends of all." p. 214, 216.

4. NOTES ON BROWNING'S POEMS.

p. 24; no. 16, p. 45. Mr. Alfred Domett tells me that he recollects this picture well. He says that it represented the 'Bridge of Sighs,' with a deep-blue sky backing the white arch, and that Browning's lines were printed in the Catalog of the Gallery where the picture appeared.

As to the sizes of Br.'s books,—*Stratford* appeared in 1837 in demy 8vo., as noted on p. 41.

p. 25. Mr. James Thomson would put *Men and Women* into Browning's Third Period. I still can't, tho no doubt Br. culminated in characterization in that Second-Period work, as Shakspere did in his Second-Period *Henry IV*. But *Dramatis Personæ* and the *Ring and the Book* are greater than *Men and Women*, as *Hamlet* is greater than *Henry IV*.

It is Br.'s early Fourth-Period books that have set so many folk unreasonably against him: *Schwangau*, *Fifine*, *Red Cotton*, *Inn Album*, and *Pacchiarotto*; while *Aristophanes' Apology* has fail'd to hold some of those whom *Balaustion* won.

p. 31. To the E. B. B. poems add the Prolog and Epilog to (154) 'The two Poets of Croisic.'

p. 37. (2) *Pauline* was surely written under the influence of Keats, who came after Byron, in Br.'s reading. See Mr. Gosse's article in *Scribner's Century*, Dec. 1881, p. 148 abuv.

p. 38. *Paracelsus*. Mr. F. D. Matthew sends me the inscription on his tomb:—"Conditur hic Philippus Theophrastus Insignis Medecine Doctor Qui Dira illa Vulnere, Lepream, Podagram, Hydroposim, aliaque insanabilia corporis contagia mirifica arte sustulit ac bona sua in pauperes distribuenda collocandaque honoravit Anno MDXXXI Die XXIII Septembris vitam cum morte mutavit [*Coat of Arms*.] Pax vivis Requies eterna sepultis." (The *honoravit* is for *honoravit*. "*Honorare*.—In honorem seu feudum concedere; donner en fief. (A. D. 1261.)—Muneribus seu beneficiis prosequi; combler de présents ou de bienfaits. (A. D. 1228.)"—*D'Ann.*)

p. 42. (6) *Sordello*. The story illustrates what Br. so often enforces elsewhere, that by failures a man gains. Sordello's throwing away his laureateship was a step forward in his soul's growth; and his trampling under foot the imperial badge, made his death more glorious for his spirit than a triumphant career as an earthly ruler could have let his life be. Mr. Conway's Discourse on this poem was excellent.

p. 43. (7) In the reprint of *Pippa Passes*, the 8th line of Pippa's Hymn in the Poem has a wrong *than* for a right *that* in it. Readers should correct the mistake in their books, and have "Costs it more pain that this . . ." Mr. Lowell says there are many more misprints throughout B.'s works. The American edition is still worse: see Mr. F. May Holland's prose story of *Sordello*, 1880.

p. 45 (no. 13). Note the splendidly vivid picture of Gismond dashing his fist into his liar-opponent's mouth.

p. 45 (no. 18). "What's become of Waring?" Why, he "'s become" a Vice-President and Member of the Browning Society.

p. 45. (20) *Cristina*. This was meant for a young man who fell in love with Queen Cristina of Spain, and went mad. Powell's assertion in the Notes, p. 114, abuv, as to Queen Victoria, is false.

p. 45, 113. (22) *The Pied Piper*. I believe the earliest English authority for the story of the *Pied Piper* is Richard Verstegan, in his *Restitution of Decayed Intelligence* (1605). On pp. 85-87 he tells how the Emperor Charles the Great had "great & troublesome warres with the Saxons," and transported a great number of them into Transylvania, where they kept their Saxon language, and were "euen vnto this day called by the name of Sassons."

"And now . . . beeing by reason of speaking of these Saxons of *Transiluania* put in mynd of a most true & maruelous strange accedent that hapned in *Saxonia* not many ages past, I cannot omit, for the strangenes thereof, briefly heer by the way to set it down. There came into the town of *Hamel* in the countrey of *Brunswyce* an od kynd of compaignon, who for the fantastical cote which hee wore, beeing wrought with sundry colours, was called the pyed pyper; for a pyper The pyed hee was, besydes his other qualities. This fellow forsooth offred the towns- Pyper. men for a certain somme of mony to rid the town of all the rattes that were in it (for at that tyme the burgers were with that vermin greatly annoyed). The accord in fyne beeing made; the pyed pyper with a shril pype went pyping through the streets, and forthwith the rattes came all running out of the howses in great numbers after him; all which hee led vnto the riuier of *Weaser*, and therein drowned them. This donne, and no one rat more perceaued to bee left in the town; he afterward came to demaund his reward according to his bargain, but beeing told that the bargain was not made with him in good earnest, to wit, with an opinion that euer hee could bee able to do such a feat: they cared not what they accorded vnto, when they imagyned it could neuer bee deserued, and so neuer to bee demaunded: but neuertheless seeing hee had donne such an vulykely thing in deed, they were content to giue him a good reward; & so offred him far lesse then hee lookt for: but hee therewith discontented, said he would haue his ful recompence [p. 86] according to his bargain; but they vtterly denying to giue it him, hee threatened them with reuenge; they bad him do his wurst; wherevpon he betakes him again to his pype, & going through the streets as before, was followed of a number of boyes out at one of the gates of the citie; and coming to a litle hil, there opened in the syde thereof a wyde hole, into the which himself and all the children, beeing in number one hundreth & thirty, did enter; and beeing entred, the hil closed vp again, and became as before. A boye that beeing lame & came somewhat lagging behynd the rest, seeing this that hapned, returned presently back & told what hee had seen; forthwith began great lamentation among the parents for their children, and men were sent out with all dilligence, both by land & by water to enquire yf ought could bee heard of them, but with all the enquiryie they could possibly vse, nothing more then is aforesaid could of them bee vnderstood. In memorie whereof it was then ordayned, that from thenceforth no drum, pype, or other instrument, should bee sounded in the street leading to the gate through which they passed; nor no osterie to bee there *holden*. And it was also established, that from that tyme forward, in all publyke *wrytings that should bee made in that town, after the date therein set down of the*

Wonderfull transporting away of 130 children.

yeare of our Lord, the date of the yeare of the going foorth of their children should bee added, the which they haue accordingly euer since continued. And this great wonder hapned on the 22. day of Iuly, in the yeare of our Lord one thowsand three hundreth seauentie, and six.

"The occasion now why this matter came vnto [p. 87] my remembrance in speaking of *Transilvania*, was, for that some do reporte that there are diuers found among the Saxons in *Transilvania* that haue lyke surnames vnto diuers of the burgers of *Hamel*, and wil seem thereby to inferre, that this iugler or pyed pyper, might by negromancie haue transported them thether; but this carieth litle apparence of truthe; because it would haue bin almost as great a wonder vnto the Saxons of *Transilvania* to haue had so many strange children brought among them, they knew not how, as it was to those of *Hamel* to lose them: & they could not but haue kept memorie of so strange a thing, yf in deed any such thing had there hapned."

Verstegan, then, is nearer Browning's story than Howel, tho the poet had never seen V. before his poem was written. He got the story from North Wanley's *Wonders of the Little World* (fol. 1678) and the authorities there cited. In the new edition of Wanley, 1774, the tale is told shortly at p. 632, col. 2, and the authorities quoted, are *Wier. de prestig. Dæmon. li. 1, c. 16, p. 47*; *Schot. phys. curios. li. 3, c. 24, p. 519*; *Howel's Ep. vol. 1, § 6, epist. 59, p. 241*. The brothers Grimm, in their *Deutsche Sagen* (1816, i. 330-33), tell the tale, and give nine authorities for it besides Verstegan. They date it—as the town inscription does—1284, and say that Seyfried (*Medulla*, p. 476) states the day is June 22, not July 26, in the town book. They also give the inscription on the Rath-baus (isn't *Rath* spelt *Rat* now?) and on the new gate, and say that in 1572 the story was painted on the church windows, with an inscription underneath that had since become illegible. Friends tell me that the story is also in Heylin's *Microcosmos*—from Verstegan—in Thorpe's *Northern Mythology*, iii. 119, 120, and in Chambers's *Book of Days*,¹ and that in the 1876 edition of Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy* (p. 128) the sad event is said to have happened on "20 June 1484." Such is history!

The story—rats being turned into mice—is notised by Addison in his paper on the Opera, 'Spectator,' No. 5, March 6, 1711, p. 13, col. 1, ed. Morley (W. G. Stone); and a like tale is told of Newtown, Isle of Wight, in 'Legends of the Isle of Wight,' illustrated by G. Cruikshank (A. J. Munby, author of the delightful poem 'Dorothy').

p. 45-6 (no. 23, 24). As instances of Browning's quickness in work I may say that he wrote *The Return of the Druses* in 5 days—an act a day—as well as *The Blot in the Scutcheon* in a like time; and that he wrote (55) *Love among the Ruins*, (90) *Women and Roses*, and (70) *Childe Roland* in three successive days, 1, 2 & 3, January 1852.

There is no historic foundation for (50) *Luria*, or (25) *Colombe's Birthday*, or (23) the *Druses*, except that Druses do live in Lebanon, and have initiated and uninitiated folk, and that among them was a Mansur, as Browning found out after he had written the play. Note that *Pippa*, *The Blot*, *Colombe*, *In a Balcony*, *Luria*, and the *Druses* observe the classical unity of time: the events of each happen in one day.

p. 48. (32) The Tomb that the Bishop ordered at St. Praxed's was of course an imaginary one, as well as the Bishop himself; but an American visitor lately at the Church, having given a special tip to be shown this Bishop's tomb, it was forthwith pointed out to him by the attendant. (This fact illustrates the many identifications of sites &c., in Jerusalem and the Holy Land.)

p. 50. (46) Note the admirable sea- and land- scape of it.

p. 53. (60) The picture that Fra Lippo was to paint, with the "sweet angelic slip of a thing" &c., lines 347-377, is in the *Accademia delle Belle Arti* at Florence. There is no "babe" in the picture.² On 'the Prior's niece,' l. 387, compare W. S.

¹ See also *Notes and Queries*, Series III.

² Two copies of the fotograf of it will be sent to every Member of the Society. A riband with *Isle perfect Opus* (l. 377 of the poem) runs from the Angel within the bar, to Fra Lippo without.

Landon's *Imaginary Conversation* between Fra Filippo Lippi and Pope Eugenius the Fourth. *Works*, 1846, ii. 82, col. 1. "In fact there were only two genuine abbates, the third was Donna Lisetta, the good canonico's pretty niece, who looks so archly at your Holiness when you bend your knees before her at bed-time.

Eugenius. How? Where?

Filippo. She is the angel on the right hand side of the Holy Family, with a tip of amethyst-coloured wing over a basket of figs and pomegranates. I painted her from memory: she was then only fifteen, and worthy to be the niece of an archbishop

Eugenius. Poor soul! So this is the angel with the amethyst-coloured wing? I thought she looked wanton . . .

As to M. Etienne's review in the *Deux Mondes*, p. 96 above:—When Browning wrote this poem, he knew that the mastership or pupilship of Fra Lippo to Masaccio (cald 'Guidi' in the poem), and *vice versa*, was a moot point; but in making Fra Lippo the master, he followed the best authority he had access to, the last edition of Vasari, as he stated in a Letter to the 'Pall Mall' at the time, in answer to M. Etienne. Since then, he finds that the latest enquirer into the subject, Morelli, believes the fact is the other way, and that Fra Lippo was the pupil.

p. 54. (70) The incident of the horse in *Childe Roland* was imagined from a red horse with a glaring eye standing behind a dun one, on the right hand of a large tapestry that still hangs in Browning's drawing-room. The story is *not* an allegory, but simply a vivid dramatic piece, written in 1 day as pure imagining.

p. 54. (73) The Bust was invented by Br. The Statue is that of the "Great-Duke Ferdinand" in the Square of the Santissima Annunziata, Florence. Fotografis of it will perhaps be ordered for all the Members of the Society next year.

p. 54. (78) *The Patriot* was not meant for Arnold of Brescia.

p. 54. (80) Note that tho Blougram exposes himself, he yet beats Gigadibs from his position, and sends him off to earn his bread in the Colonies.

p. 55 (no. 82). *Andrea del Sarto*. A most interesting thing has just happend to me about this poem. On Saturday night, Nov. 19, 1881, the following letter reacht me:—

"35, Piazza del Duomo, Florence, 16. 11. 81.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"In the gallery of the Pitti palace, numbered in the catalogue 118, and painted by Andrea del Sarto, is a portrait of himself and his wife. I think no one can look at this picture, with Browning's most beautiful poem in his mind, without being deeply moved, and without feeling at the same time sure that it was from this picture that the poet received the *impulse* to his work. The mere facts (as we all know) are as old at least as Vasari.

"As a student, Browning's deep penetration into matters of art has always delighted me. His clear divination of the restless *individualities* that can be subjugated, and *lost* sometimes to a careless eye, in the exhibition of the ordered graces of art (whether that art be a painter's, a musician's, or a poet's), he has shown again and again. There is a great band of artists—in all kinds—to whom he has revealed himself as a true friend; and we love him because he first loved us. The poem of *Andrea del Sarto* exhibits this power of penetration in a remarkable degree. Any one who has sat, as I have, looking at the picture of which I write, will feel that the poem is *true*—not merely typically but historically.

"The catalogue says: 'The painter, seen in three-quarter face, appears by the gesture of his left hand to appeal to his wife Lucrezia Fede. His right hand rests on her shoulder (his arm is around her, I may remark—an act of tenderness which has much to do with the pathos of the composition). Lucrezia is presented in full face, with a golden chain on her neck, and a letter in her hands.'

"The artist and his wife are represented at half length. Andrea turns towards her with a pleading expression on his face—a face not so beautiful as that in the *splendid portrait* in the National Gallery; but when once felt, it strikes a deeper chord. It wears an expression that cannot be forgotten—that nothing can suggest

but the poem of Browning.¹ Andrea's right arm, as I said, is round her; he leans forward as if searching her face for the strength that has gone from himself. She is beautiful. I have seen the face (varied as a musician varies his theme) in a hundred pictures. She holds the letter in her hand, and looks neither at that nor at him, but straight out of the canvas. And the beautiful face, with the red brown hair, is passive and unruffled, and awfully expressionless.

'I've but one simile, and that's a blunder,
For a proud angry woman, and that's silent thunder!'

writes Byron (I will not vouch for my quotation). There is 'silent thunder' in this face if there ever was, tho' there is no anger. It suggests only a very mild, and at the same time immutable determination to 'have her own way'. It seems rather a personification of obstinacy in the female type (which would have looked well in stone, had the Greeks thought of it) than a portrait. She is a magnificent *Rosamund Vincy*, and will lure her husband to his own damnation as kindly and surely as George Eliot's heroine does the unfortunate Lydgate [in 'Middlemarch'].

"There is no photograph of this picture, or I should have sent you one.² Really whilst looking at it the words of the poem come little by little into my mind, and it seems as if I had read them in Andrea's face. And so now when I read it in my room, the picture is almost as vividly before me as when I am in the gallery, so completely do the two seem complementary. Wishing your society all success,

"I remain, my dear Sir, yours very truly,
"ERNEST RADFORD."

On Sunday morning, Nov. 20, some 14 hours after the letter above came, I askt Browning whether the Pitti picture had suggested his picture. He said, Yes, it had. Mr. Kenyon, his wife's old friend and his own, had askt him to buy for him, Mr. K., a copy of the Pitti *Andrea*. None was on sale, or to be got; and so Browning, as he couldn't send a copy of the painting, wrote what it told him in words, and sent his poem to Mr. Kenyon.

Mr. Radford's letter is at once a witness to his own penetration, and to the power and truth of Browning's creative art,—which makes us claim him as the greatest "Maker," and master of characterization, since Shakspeare.

p. 55. (88) The Queen's part seems to me the intensest in Br.'s dramatic work.

p. 55. (89) Note Br.'s love for Italy, and cp. the end of the Italian review, p. 139 abuv.

Italy, my Italy! . . .	39
Open my heart and you will see	
Graved inside of it "Italy",	44
Such lovers old are I and she;	
So it always was, so shall ever be!	46

p. 55. (93) Alinari has the commission to get a good foto of Guercino's 'Angel,' and print copies for all our Members.

¹ Compare Hawthorne: 1858, Sept. 10. "I paid a visit to the gallery of the Pitti Palace. There is too large an intermixture of Andrea del Sarto's pictures in this gallery; everywhere you see them, cold, proper, and uncriticisable, looking so much like first-rate excellence, that you inevitably quarrel with your own taste for not admiring them . . .

"It was one of those days when my mind misgives me whether the pictorial art be not a humbug, and when the minute accuracy of a fly in a Dutch picture of fruit and flowers seems to me something more reliable than the master-touches of Raphael." *Passages from the French and Italian Note-Books of Nathaniel Hawthorne*, ii. 165. (But see p. 118 for H.'s comments on a Pitti Raphael, and p. 60 for those on Titian's Magdalen: "She a penitent! She would shake off all pretence to it as easily as she would shake aside that clustering hair . . . Titian must have been a very good-for-nothing old man." But H. is at home on Englishmen: see p. 176-9.)

² I have ordered one to be made for the Society, and every Member will have two copies. But the negative will have to be much toucht. The pure foto is a mere blotch. Mr. J. Dykes Campbell will see that Alinari does the work rightly.

p. 56. (102) In this Br. remonstrates with himself, and points out, dramatically, his own fault: he speaks 'naked thoughts,' whilst 'Song' is his art. So again:—

"But here's your fault: 'grown men want thought' you think;

'Thought's what they mean by verse, and seek in verse:'

Boys seek for images and melody;

Men have reason. . . .

QUITE OTHERWISE. [Men don't want thought, they want pleasure, emotion.]
So come, the harp back to your heart again!"

p. 56. (105) *Ben Karshook* had better be scand as iambics.

p. 57. In 1862 came out 'Last Poems by Elizabeth Barrett Browning. London. 1862.' R. B. wrote the Dedication—"To 'Grateful Florence' [see p. 111 above], to the Municipality, her Representative, and to Tommaseo, its Spokesman, most gratefully,"—and the "Advertisement. These Poems are given as they occur on a list drawn up last June. A few had already been printed in periodicals. There is hardly such direct warrant for publishing the Translations; which were only intended, many years ago, to accompany and explain certain Engravings after ancient Gems, in the projected work of a friend, by whose kindness they are now recovered: but as two of the original series (the 'Adonis' of Bion, and 'Song to the Rose' from Achilles Tatius) have subsequently appeared, it is presumed that the remainder may not improperly follow. A single recent version is added. London, February, 1862."

p. 59. (107) This tells the gradual estrangement of a low-natured husband from a noble-natured artistic wife, and their separation in § IX. In § VIII the peazant girl has been sitting as a model to the artist-wife. The girl's coarse hand is, I suppose, a lesson to teach the wife that, tho her earthly love leaves her, there's plenty of work for her to do in the world, and then heaven to follow. In § VI the wife speaks, as in all the other stanzas.

p. 61. (113) Rabbi Ben Ezra or Ibn Ezra was a learned Jew, 1092-1167, A. D. He must not be confuzed with the only man of the name in the *Biogr. Universelle*:—"EZRA (*Juan-Josafat Ben*), pseudonyme de l'auteur inconnu de la *Venida del Mezius* (the Coming of the Messiah). On croit que cet auteur était Américain et vivait vers le milieu du dix-huitième siècle. On trouve dans son livre une érudition étendue et une critique hardie. Cet ouvrage a été réédité par P. de Chamrobert, sous le titre de *La Venida del Mezius en gloria y magestad; edicion emendada particularmente en cuanto a las citas*; Paris, 1826, 5 vol. in 12.—P. de Chamrobert. *Préface* de son édition.—Wolf, *Bibliotheca Hebraica*,—Rossi, *Dizionario storico degli Autori Ebrei*."

Ibn Ezra, and Maimonides, whom he is said to have visited in Egypt, were two of the four great Philosophers or Lights of the Jews in the Middle Ages. Ibn Ezra was born at Toledo in Spain, about 1092 or 1093 A.D., or in 1088 according to Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden*, vi. 198. He was poor, but studied hard, composed poems wherewith to "Adorn my own, my Hebrew nation," married, had a son Isaac (a poet too), travelld to Africa, the Holy Land, Rome in 1140, Persia, India, Italy, France, England. He wrote many treatises, on Hebrew Grammar, astronomy, mathematics, &c., commentaries on the books of the Bible, &c.—many of them in Rome—and two pamphlets in England 'for a certain Salomon of London.' Joseph of Maudeville was one of his English pupils. He died in 1167, at the age of 75, either in Kalahorra, on the frontier of Navarre, or in Rome. His commentary on Isaiah has been englisht by M. Friedländer, and publisht by the Society of Hebrew Literature, Triebner, 1873. From the Introduction to that book I take these details. Ibn Ezra believd in a future life. In his Commentary on Isaiah lv. 3, "*And your soul shall live*," he says (p. 253), "That is, your soul shall live for ever after the death of the body, or you will receive new life through Messiah, when you will return to the Divine Law." See also p. 168, on Isaiah xxxix. 18. Of the potter's clay passage, Is. xxix. 16, he has only a translation, "Shall man be esteemed as the potter's clay," and no comment that could have given Browning a hint for his use of the metaphor in his poem, even if he had ever seen Ibn Ezra's commentary.

p. 61. (122) *Apparent Failure*: the bodies were seen in the Morgue by Browning himself.

p. 61. (113) See Rabbi ben Ezra's fine "Song of Death" in stanzas 12-20 of the grimly humorous *Holy-Cross Day*, no. 92.

p. 62. In the reading of *Luria* at our house in November last, I noted many improvements in the text in the '68 edition as compar'd with my '63 one. Probably many other poems and plays were revized for the new 6-vol. edition.

Mr. Ernest Radford has made another interesting discovery about Br.'s sympathy with Art. In *Luria* I. 121-7, the Secretary tells Braccio that Luria drew the charcoal sketch that attracted his notice, a Moorish front to the unfinished Duomo or Cathedral of Florence, typifying Luria's leadership of the Florentine army. And Br. makes Braccio say, "I see: A Moorish front, nor of such ill design!" Br. had instinctively felt that the lines of the Duomo lent themselves to eastern treatment. Well, Mr. Radford, poking about, went to a small and rarely visited museum, called the *Opera del Duomo*, containing drawings and models relating to the Cathedral, and there his eye was caught by a drawing of the Duomo completed by a Moorish front (drawn in 1822, and given to the Museum in 1833). Some architect or artist had been moved by the same feeling as Br., and had carried it out on paper. Br. had of course never seen or heard of this drawing.

p. 65. (127) *Hervé Riel*: the facts of the story had been forgotten and were denied at St. Malo, but the Reports to the French Admiralty at the time were looked up, and the facts established. See the account in the *Promenade au Croisic*, par Gustave Grandpré, iii. 186, and *Notes sur le Croisic*, par Cailla Jeune, p. 67, a "Croisic Guide-Book." Browning's only alteration is that Hervé Riel's holiday to see his wife "La Belle Aurore," was not to last a day only, but his life-time: "ce brave homme ne demandait pour récompense d'un service aussi signalé, qu'un congé absolu pour rejoindre sa femme, qu'il nommait la Belle Aurore." The battle of La Hogue was fought on May 19, 1692.

p. 66. (129) *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau*.¹ Mrs. Orr on: "The Emperor is supposed to describe or imagine the leading actions of his reign under three different aspects—as they appear in the light of his own conscience, as they would have been if they had conformed to a general rule of right, and as they must have appeared to those who measured them by such a rule. He begins by admitting and defending his wavering policy as dictated by the highest expedience; and then proceeds to enumerate the acts and motives which eulogistic historians of the Thiers and Hugo type would impute to him; opposing to this ideal version, step by step, the rejected suggestions of sagacity, which depict his actual thoughts and deeds in the obvious shallowness of their temporizing worldly wisdom. The argument which occupies the first half of the book is an elaborate vindication of the policy of leaving things as they are, saving only such improvement as implies no radical change. A piece of paper lying close to the speaker's hand supplies him with an illustration. The paper has two blots upon it, and he mechanically draws a line from one to the other; it does not occur to him to make a third, but it does occur to him to connect the two already made. That he does this, and no more, is typical of his conduct through life. He has not been gifted with the genius that could create, but he has been gifted with the sober intelligence which appreciates the risk of destroying. The great renewing changes of life are wrought by special agencies and under special conditions, as in the physical world. . . . And he is convinced that the highest wisdom of a non-inspired ruler is to assist those who are subject to his rule, to live the life into which they were born, trusting to the deeper laws of existence to vindicate good through evil, and perfection through imperfection. He too has recognized the destroying folly of sects and opinions, (p. 939) but he has seen that to suppress the one would be to give predominance to the other, and has thought it best to leave truth to assert itself in the balance of error; he has thought society best saved by being left alone. He too has had dreams of a higher utility. . . . 'Hear ye not still—"Be Italy again"?' But with the time for action had come a new sense of responsibility; nearer duties to fulfil, more urgent needs to satisfy; mouths craving food, hands craving work, eyes that begged only for the light of life—and he has worked first for these. In this strain he continues. . . . At the end of the book [is] an appeal, half playful, half pathetic, from the vanity of words to the incommuni-

¹ Hohen Schwangau is one of the Castles of the King of Bavaria. He disappeared suddenly from it, just before Christmas, 1881.

eable essence of individual truth." (On p. 946-7 Mrs. Orr expounds her view that "The dominant impression that all truth is a question of circumstance, and consequently all picturesque force a question of detail, explains every peculiarity of form and conception [in Br.]. It explains more or less directly everything that charms us in his writings, and everything that repels us." I hope other readers who turn to the passage will get more help from it than I have been able to do.)

p. 71 (no. 166). *Pietro of Abano*. In Bp. Thirlwall's 'Letters to a Friend,' 1881, ii. 77-9, is a story like Peter's. "A young student calls on Don Manuel at Seville, and asks for a spell to get him along in life. Don Manuel calls to his housekeeper, 'Jacinta, roast the partridges. Don Diego will stay to dinner.' The student makes a grand career; is Dean, Bishop, and then Pope soon after he is fourty. When Don Manuel calls on him in Rome, he threatens the magician, who has made him, with the prisons of the Holy Office. And then hears Don Manuel call out, 'Jacinta, you need not put down the partridges. Don Diego will not stay to dinner.' And, lo! Diego found himself at Don Manuel's door,—with his way yet to make in the world." This is from an englishing of an old Spanish collection of stories, *El Conde Lucanor*. Mr. Matthew gives me the reference. Mr. Garnett has since handed me a cutting from the 'St. James's Gazette' of Aug. 1880, telling the same story from the German poet Chamisso, who had versified it, but treated it simply as an anecdote. Mr. Sharpe's Paper on this Poem (below) is an admirable one.

p. 72. *Browning's Printed Letters*. Jn. Forster cites several to himself from R. B. about Landor, in his 'W. S. Landor, a Biography,' 1869. ii. 563 (Aug. 13, 1859); ii. 565-6 (close of August, Sept. 5, and Oct. 1859); ii. 566 (Dec. 9, 1859); ii. 570 (June 15, 1860). See too mentions of B. on ii. 576, 590; and i. 178.

In 1859, Landor wrote to Forster: "Nothing can exceed Mr. Browning's continued kindness. Life would be almost worth keeping for that recollection alone." ii. 568. Mr. Domett has printed part of a letter of R. B. to him in 1872, on his poem 'Ranolf and Amohia,' in a sheet of critical Notices of that poem.

p. 90. Landor's short poem "To Robert Browning" first appeared in 'The Morning Chronicle,' Saturday, Nov. 22, 1845, p. 5, col. 1, at foot.

p. 102. Mr. Domett's lines are from his 'Ranolf and Amohia,' 1872, Canto XIX, p. 342-3. As the copy sent me before was not correct, I print them again:—

'strange melodies'

That lustrous Song-Child languished to impart,
Breathing his boundless Love through boundless Art—
Impassioned Seraph, from his mint of gold
By our full-handed Master-Maker flung;
By him, whose lays, like eagles, still upwheeling
To that shy Empyrean of high feeling,
Float steadiest in the luminous fold on fold
Of wonder-cloud around its sun-depths rolled.
Whether he paint, all patience and pure snow,
Pompilia's fluttering innocence unsoiled;—
In verse, though fresh as dew, one lava flow
In fervour—with rich Titian-dyes aglow—
Paint Paracelsus to grand frenzy stung,
Quixotic dreams and fiery quackeries foiled;—
Or—of Sordello's delicate Spirit unstrung (p. 343)
For action, in its vast Ideal's glare
Blasting the Real to its own dumb despair,—
On that Venetian water-lapped stair-flight,
In words condensed to diamond, indite
A lay dark—splendid as star-spangled Night:—
Still—though the pulses of the world-wide throng
He wields, with racy life-blood beat so strong—
Subtlest Assertor of the Soul in song!

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¹ This Jewish Philosopher and Theologian is calld 'Abenezra' in the short article on him in the last edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*.

LAST FRESH CRITICAL NOTICES AND NOTES.

1868. 'North British Review,' Dec. 1868, p. 353-408. On Br.'s *Poetical Works*, by Dr. J. Hutchinson Stirling, the Hegelian. It is very hard on B.'s style and obscurity, but praises warmly *Luria*, *Artemis prologizes*, *The Soul's Tragedy*, &c. &c., and above all—evidently from early association—*The Flight of the Duchess*, which the writer had read a long extract from in the 'Examiner' 30 years before.
1877. Bayard Taylor. 'Diversions of the Echo Club' (new edition), p. 27-35: remarks on Br.'s style, and four imitations of him.—An Oxford reader.
1881. In the autumn of 1881, our member, the Rev. Fr. E. Millson of Brackenbed Grange, near Halifax, gave ten lectures for the Halifax Ladies' Educational Association, on Poems of Tennyson and Browning. In the course of these he gave analyses and explanations of *Paracelsus*, some of the *Men and Women*, and *Dramatis Personæ*, two of Browning's Dramas, and several of the *Dramatic Idylls*. The demands on the Halifax Library show that the study of Browning was helped by these Lectures.

In November 1881, the Hon. Roden Noel delivered a lecture on Browning, with readings from his works, at the Midland Institute, Birmingham; and on Jan. 31, 1882, he repeated the Lecture at the Hall, Jasmine Grove, Anerley, at 8 p.m.

1882. I lectured on Browning at the Working Men's College, Great Ormond Street, on Saturday evening, Feb. 4, 1882 (my 57th birthday), and to the Sunday Evening Association at the Neumeyer Hall, Hart St., Bloomsbury, on Feb. 19.

Br. must be notist in Prof. H. Morley's new Tauchnitz volume, 'English Literature during the reign of Victoria'; but I have not seen the volume.

1882. 'Boston Evening Transcript,' Feb. 4, p. 4. Article—going further than most of us Englishmen do—on "Shakspeare and Browning." "Place Browning beside Shakspeare, look well at both, and you will see two suns, of which you can scarcely tell how much the glory of the one differs from the glory of the other. . . Br. is the great representative of Anglo-Saxon culture in the 19th century. . . His great power as a dramatic poet is this—that he imbues his best characters with the loftiest moral idealism, then lets them sin and suffer—not, as in Shakspeare, from a defeat of earthly ambitions, but from a loss of self-respect, a humiliation so intense, that they invoke a lifetime of penance. His situations are not so sensational, his characters not so declamatory, as Shakspeare's, but their suffering is more exquisite, and makes a deeper tragedy. . . As a representative work of Browning, there could be nothing better than the *Inn Album*. . . Br. will doubtless be the poet of the next century rather than of the present. . ."

NOTES.

- p. 24. *Browning's subjects*. Compare Juvenal, *Satire* I. 85:—

"Quicquid agunt homines, votum, timor, ira, voluptas,
Gaudia, discursus, nostri est farrago libelli."

- p. 55. No. 95. *The Twins*. This, says Mr. F. G. Stephens, appeared before *Men and Women*, 1855, namely in 1854, in "Two Poems by E. B. B. and R. B." Chapman and Hall. 1854. pp. 1-16. Containing "A Plea for the Ragged Schools of London," by E. B. B., and "*The Twins*," by R. B.

These Two Poems were printed by Miss Arabella Barrett, Mrs. Browning's sister, for a Bazaar to benefit the "Refuge for young destitute Girls" which she set going in or about 1854. This Refuge, if not the first of its kind, was one of the first, and is still in existence.

In judging Browning as a poet, recollect that the word Poet does not mean merely or mainly a writer of musical verse, but,—to use the Early English name for a poet, that which succeeded the Anglo-Saxon *scop* or shaper,—a "Maker," Creator, of Men and Women, in verse. This creative, imaginative power is the first thing; thought stands beside it; music of line below both. In men of the first rank—Dante, Shakspeare—all three qualities (with many others) combine in equal excellence. Men of the second rank are to be judged by the greatness of their possession of the highest qualities, not only the lower. A Poet is not to be degraded into a Melodist, or a Painter into a Colourist.

MORE NOTES ON BROWNING'S POEMS.

My last Duchess. Fra Pandolf and his Picture, l. 3, &c., Claus of Innsbruck, and the bronze Neptune taming a sea-horse, l. 54-6, are all—persons, names and things—purely imaginary.

Old Pictures in Florence, st. viii, ix, xxviii. Dello and Stéfano (called *Scimmia della Natura*, 'Nature's Ape') are primæval Florentine Painters, of whom the lives or notices are to be found in Vasari: 'he it is who gives the portrait of Margheritone. Browning possesses the 'Crucifixion' by M. to which he alludes, as also the pictures of Alesso Baldovinetti, Taddeo Gaddi and Pollaiuolo described in the poem.

In a Gondola: l. 186, Schidone's² 'eager Duke'; l. 192, 'Castelfranco's Magdalen'; and l. 195, the Tizian: These are all imaginary pictures, suggestive of each master's style: nothing more. l. 190, "Haste-thee-Luke" is "*Luca-fa-presto*," as Luca Giordano (1629-1705) was styled—somewhat disparagingly—from his expeditious way of working.

Fra Lippo, l. 32-3: 'the slave that holds John Baptist's head a-dangle by the hair.' This picture is also imaginary.

Andrea del Sarto, l. 157-164. No picture of Francis and Andrea was known to Browning.

¹ The Florentine Dello, says Vasari,—englight in Bohn's *Standard Library*, i. 327-332,—died in Spain at the age of 47. His name is probably the diminutive of Leonardello, and he was registered in the Guild of the Apothecaries in 1417 as Dello di Nicolo Delli.—*Ed. Flor.* 1846-9, in Bohn. He workt in terra cotta, then painted scenes from stories, on coffers, elbow-chairs, couches and other furniture; then painted in fresco; went to Spain, where he earnd much money and honour, and was knighted; came back to Florence for a while, and then settled in Spain.

Stéfano's date is 1301-1350, according to Vasari, or 1260?-1339?,—*Vasari*, i. 133-139. "The Florentine painter and disciple of Giotto, Stefano, was an artist of such excellence, that he not only surpassed all those who had preceded him in the art, but left even his master Giotto himself, far behind." p. 133.—From the excellence of his fore-shortening (bad tho' it was) he was called by his brother artists, "the ape of nature," p. 135. The note says:—

Cristofano Landino, in the "Apology" preceding his *Commentary on Dante*, says:—"Stefano is called the 'Ape of Nature' by every one, so accurately does he express whatever he designs to represent."

The portrait of Margheritone of Arezzo was in the Duomo Vecchio, outside the city of Arezzo, "in a picture of the Adoration of the Magi, by Spinello, and was copied by myself before the church was destroyed" [in 1561, thirteen years before Vasari's death].—*ib.* i. 93. "Margaritone, Painter, Sculptor, and Architect of Arezzo [1236-1313]," and his works, are described in the Englight *Vasari*, i. 88-93.

² Bartolomeo Schidone was born at Modena in 1560, was said to be a pupil of the Caracci, but afterwards workt successfully in the manner of Correggio. Burckhardt suggests that he painted the portrait of Leonardo da Vinci in the Pitti Gallery at Florence, which is sometimes considered an original. 'He ruind himself by gaming, and died 1616.'—*Cooper*.

One Word More, vii. 57. 'We and *Bice*.' *Bice* is *Beatrice* abbreviated, and is in constant use.

Englishman in Italy, l. 171. 'Calvano.' Br. is far from sure that this is the right name: it was the one he heard applied in Sorrento to the great mountain opposite; but the names are greatly changed in the dialect there—for instance, *Amalfi* to *Lamarf*—as they pronounce it.

Sludge. Hume the Spiritualist was the original of him.

Protus, l. 5. 'baby-face with violets in the hair.' This bust was an imaginary one.

Fifine, § 52, p. 57-8; § 57-8, p. 63. Eidotheé: the account of her is in the *Odyssey*, Book 4, verses 364 and following. She is the goddess-daughter of the Old Man of the Sea, Proteus; and befriended Menelaos, when wind-bound on the desert-isle of Pharos, by instructing him how to circumvent and obtain knowledge from her father when he came to number his seals and rest himself at noon-day.

Fifine, § 67, p. 80-1. The words in quotation commas " ", and the bad grammar "lay" for "lie," are from Byron's *Childe Harold*, Canto IV, st. clxxx: compare "the childishest childe," *Fifine*, p. 80. And as "the Dark Blue Sea" and "lay, pray, bray" of the Epilogue to *Pacchiarotto*, st. 20, p. 236, no doubt refer to st. 129, 130 of *Childe Harold*, I copy them here, to fill up this page.—F.

clxxix.

Roll on, thou deep and dark blue Ocean—roll!
Ten thousand fleets sweep over thee in vain:
Man marks the earth with ruin—his control
Stops with the shore;—upon the watery plain
The wrecks are all thy deed, nor doth remain
A shadow of man's ravage, save his own,
When, for a moment, like a drop of rain,
He sinks into thy depths with bubbling groan,
Without a grave, unknell'd, uncoffin'd, and unknown.

clxxx.

His steps are not upon thy paths,—thy fields
Are not a spoil for him,—thou dost arise
And shake him from thee: the vile strength he wields
For earth's destruction thou dost all despise,
Spurning him from thy bosom to the skies,
And send'st him, shivering in thy playful spray,
And howling, to his Gods, where haply lies
His petty hope in some near port or bay,
And dashest him again to earth:—there let him lay.

Ned Bratts (161). This is from 'The Story of old Tod,' in Bunyan's *Life and Death of Mr. Badman*, p. 34 (Paisley, 1866). Browning has invented the conversion by reading Bunyan, and other details.—E. Radford.

Ned Bratts (161) and *Iván Ivánovitch* (159) were both written at the Splügen.

IV.

INTRODUCTORY ADDRESS TO THE BROWNING
SOCIETY.

BY THE REV. J. KIRKMAN, M.A., QUEEN'S COLL., CAMBRIDGE.

Friday, October 28, 1881, at University College, London.

AMONG the honours and penalties to which the higher order of genius is doomed may be reckoned reverential students, enthusiastic advocates, purblind detractors; then reviews and volumes of criticism; lastly, a *Society* for the special study of a man's works. To all this has Mr. Browning now come. We do ourselves the honour of meeting to-night to inaugurate the *Browning Society*. The words have been already printed, "It exists." And I call to mind some words of the other great Poet of our Golden Age, singing of Nature and considering everywhere her secret meaning in her deeds, and

"Finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear."

What might some infant have been! What might it not have been!
Of the infants cast up on the shore of the living, Blake says,

"Some are born to sweet delight:
Some are born to endless night."

The possibility of a child

"Whose exterior semblance doth belie its soul's immensity,"

as Wordsworth says, might have developed into a *critic* to save poets from a short mortality of fame, or a curse to deluge mountain-tops in the region of mind with merciless floods of words. Thus this *Society*, while hitherto *in ovo*, has already undergone ridicule and the killing frost of indifference. Nevertheless it makes an attempt *to be*; and possibly may develop into a worthy successor of the *Lyncei* of the sixteenth century. When its requiem shall be sung, after a long or short life, that life will have been one of noble intentions and efforts, at least in full harmony with the merits and requirements of the case, and suited to the customs of the age in which we eclectic ones live both to learn and teach. Let us unanimously resolve that it shall not exist in vain; but shall deserve both guineas and gratitude for the benefits it shall

dispense. Although we cannot and would not shoulder Browning up into a factitious popularity that would be sure to become extinct like fireworks, we may be instrumental in organizing, developing, and cultivating, the recognition, which is the first element in our *raison d'être*, that Browning is undoubtedly the profoundest intellect, with widest range of sympathies, and with universal knowledge of men and things, that has arisen as a poet since Shakespeare. In knowledge of many things he is necessarily superior to Shakespeare, as being the all-receptive child of the century of science and travel. In carefulness of construction, and especially in the genius of constructing *drama*, he claims not comparison with Shakespeare. But his truly Shakespearian genius pre-eminently shines in his power to throw his whole intellect and sympathies into the most diverse individualities; to think and feel as one of them would, although undoubtedly glorified by Browning's genius within. Goethe's canon is, "The Poet should seize the particular, and he should, if there be anything sound, thus represent the universal." In this Browning is infallible: but he is, as Shakespeare often is, perceptible through the visor of his assumed individuality. Notice the great number of persons, the wide range of characters and specialities, through which he speaks. Browning rightly and proudly enough scorns the interpretation of being made to speak his own soul when he utters the soul of another. "With this same key Shakespeare unlocked his heart. Did Shakespeare? If so, the less Shakespeare he." (*Pacchiarotto* volume, p. 63.) The fullest poem in which his chief characteristics of throwing himself into the individuality of another, of unfolding the history of a human soul, and of making the human subjective modes called time and eternity inseparable, so that the struggling and emotions and efforts or desires of a life, or a day, or a thought, for any mind, prove it like "a pin-point rock" founded in earth but pointing heavenwards, is *Sordello*. In lesser degrees of detailed unfolding, most of his poems are acts or scenes in some "soul's development." I said, his profound acquaintance with men and things was Shakespearian. I should have emphatically said, with men, *women*, and things. Browning's women are as wonderful a class almost as Shakespeare's. He understands women with perfecter intuition and less uniform rose-colour than Richter, of whom Browning often reminds us. Anthony can no more say of *any* woman, "She is cunning past *man's* thought," (*A. & C.* i. 2.)

I do not attempt to attract the notice of the Eumenides by specially referring to Browning's women now.

Browning is our nearest to Shakespeare. Comparisons may flit and *pass*: but we take him on his indisputable merits, not blindly, but

proudly and gratefully. Some one told Goethe that the Germans disputed whether he or his contemporary Schiller were the greater poet. His worthy reply was, "They ought to be very thankful that they have two such fellows to dispute about." But let me add what De Quincey says on resembling Shakespeare, when he pays that tribute to Richter: "If a man could reach Venus or Mercury, we should not say he has advanced to a great distance from the earth: we should say he is very near to the Sun. So also, if in anything a man approaches Shakespeare, or does but remind us of him, all other honours are swallowed up in that: a relation of inferiority to him is a more enviable distinction than all degrees of superiority to others; the rear of his splendours a more eminent post than the supreme station in the van of all others." (De Quincey, 'On Richter.' Vol. xiii. 119, 120.)

We have to consider to-night both Browning and the *Browning Society* as correlative, but not as coincident. For the keynote has been given to me of "Characteristics of Browning's Poetry and Philosophy." But this is too ambitious. We cannot scamper over the whole field of Browning's works, with the rapidity of him who brought the good news from Ghent to Aix. It is only an open question for some of us, as yet, how far these *characteristics* conceal or reveal the Poetry and Philosophy: as bees, when they are too numerous, swarm all over the hive, while the regular work of honey-making is in abeyance. I wished more modestly to have taken for title, "*Browning made easy*." I am still somewhat fondly of opinion that that title would have been suitable. A friend said to me, "If you could manage that, you would have a tremendous following. A man ought to be *born* with a faculty for understanding Browning: so, if he is not, you must try to create it." Another said that title would be undignified. But it raises the question, on which I hope there will be some discussion, whether we are more to address ourselves to the select circle of ourselves who do already love and value Browning far beyond the measure of conventional acknowledgment, and desire to help each other to study him more and know him better; or whether we are not rather to appeal to the far larger circle of those who may wisely be attracted to discover and appreciate him for themselves. I venture to suggest that, for various reasons the latter attempt will secure a measure of the former, rather than *vice versâ*. For the two chief notorious facts that we can never lose sight of, are: 1st, the intense devotedness, the intellectual reverence, and profound personal indebtedness, of Browning's admirers; and 2nd, the vast prevalence of indifference, dislike or depreciation, which prevents him from being the popular teacher he deserves to be to this generation, and might be with infinite advantage. I hardly know a greater pain and

bitterer disappointment caused by facts in the history of literature, than that given by the acknowledgment registered in that sad and abhorred line, which Milton's archangelic haughtiness would have made him scorn to write :

"You, British public, you who love me not."

Let us, with Uncle Toby's recording angel, let fall a tear on that repeated line, as we have written it down, and blot it out for ever. The regret over this, which is however by no means so fully the fact as he may have been led to feel from isolated symptoms, is akin to that one feels over Bacon and Jeremy Taylor ignoring the existence of their greater contemporary and superior, Shakespeare. Yet, our special business is with reference to this love and indifference, to help the light to conquer more of the darkness, and the love to overcome the indifference. If the unanswerable plea for the indifference to Browning be his extreme obscurity, "dark with excess of light," and painfully rapid succession of thoughts, and general difficulty in following thro' the involved tangle of endless sentences, subtlety of perpetual suggestiveness, which can only be overcome and turned into pleasure by very intellectual and persevering readers; this is a legitimate object for our Society to deal with. And we may, with respect to it, gather hope to-night from the pleasing paradox (if you will notice the list of Members, and especially the four caryatides which support the entablature of this Society), of the great proportion of *clergymen* and *ladies*! About 2 to 1 on the whole. The poet has no need to be ashamed of his clients; nor they of themselves, in the intellectual ranks likely to influence lower mortals. Still, in the face of this, no one can fairly reiterate the pretty old class slander that we (of those two species) are emphatically those in whom emotion dominates over intellect and judgment. Speaking for myself, probably also herein for my peers, this suggests one of the most practical hints we have to offer; that *our* elective affinities are determined by a man's *best works*; and are not dissolved by those which are less worthy of his greatest self.

Wherefore, as the all-important subject of *classification* has already been mentioned by the Chairman, *we must first divide Browning's works into two great classes*. I don't think either of the two volumes of *Selections* has done this wisely. And I anticipate that probably my division may be repudiated by some present, or counted unworthy and trivial. Nevertheless, it is possible that the lapse of time may only strengthen this roughly reasonable classification. First, *those works which may be understood and enjoyed*. Second, *those which never will be*: such as the involved narratives and subtle disquisitions, the store of head-aches, and volumes of cobwebs strung with innumerable pearls glittering

in a light beyond our ordinary powers of vision. This division corresponds loosely with that between his earlier and later works ; although by no means accurately or entirely, of course. With respect to such a rather daring distinction, I presume most humbly to suggest that blind adulation and indiscriminate commendation of all that our great teacher has writ, because *he* has writ it, is no rational allegiance to him on the part of such sincere disciples as we are ; and in proportion as it should threaten to prevail, must lower the standard of this Society. I believe it was Coleridge who said, "The affections are monarchical, but the intellect is democratic." Nor ought we to be embarrassed by the fact that Browning is still alive. May he long live : on into his aftermath, the

"rare afterbirth of peeping blooms sprinkled its wealth among,"

similar to the glorious season of 40 or less years ago. We can hardly help feeling that if Browning would *take our advice*, we should "make him all he ought to be." But at least we will study, while he laughs kindly on us.

Now, I have claimed somewhat of the function of a *foolometer* to-night ; or, as Bacon said, to think with the learned and speak with the vulgar : and in that capacity may state one case that represents thousands. An intelligent man hears Browning praised. He finds *Red Cotton Night-Cap Country*, or *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau* or *Pacchiarotto* within reach. He says, "I read it once and could not make cap or *queue* of it. I thought I had read it *too fast*. I read it again, with no more success, and thought I had read it *too slowly*. I read it a third time *aloud*, dropped pieces of my broken teeth on the carpet in the process, and gave up Browning in despair." There is great reasonableness in that. *He began in the wrong class*. So is a well-disposed convert lost. He had perhaps never heard of *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, or *Christmas Eve*, or *Saul*. This case has been related, as you are aware, in some Periodical ; and we have frequently met with such cases ourselves. Moreover, it illustrates the fact of some one of the later volumes lying near, while probably the three volumes of earlier compositions were returning unto dust on the book-shelf. If the cruel difference between *Christmas Eve* and *Easter Day*, for instance, and *Pacchiarotto* or *P. Hohenstiel-Schwangau*, does prevail to any reasonable degree between the earlier and later works, therein is a mystery and a titanic grief on which least shall be said and most felt. Some find compensation in the theory that Browning has insisted on enlarging our conception of what must be included under the designation of *Poetry* ; and that he has, with the indisputable right of genius acting by its own instinctive laws, created an expansion beyond the accepted manners of

his predecessors, as the Natural School did beyond the mechanical formality of Pope. Then some new name is wanted. It is infinitely too serious to be doggerel, in spite of all the wantonness and fun of quaint rhyming and punning; yet so often apparently deficient in the conscientious elaborating and perfecting which he condescends to affirm in his short prefaces. It won't come under any *definition* that I know. Where we cannot understand we must wonder. I believe that is the philosophical attitude of spirit in any such emergency. The charge of *obscurity* has been so admirably met by Mr. Swinburne in the Browning digression in his noble Introduction to George Chapman's Poems, that there is no need to refute it further. But as to the cognate charge of *ruggedness*, I am inclined, instead of blaming, to glory in Browning's writings as a protest of the grandest kind against the popular demand that everything is to be *smooth* and *sweet* now-a-days. Sweetness and smoothness, the combination which now threatens to emasculate both literary and religious productions, both writing, speech, and action, while still the serpents are gliding under the grass and the roses where there ought to be some burr-thistles too, is no equivalent to Swift's "sweetness and light." Even the polished poet-prophet Isaiah (c. xxx. 10) stoutly resisted it. And Browning evidently shares this feeling with us; as he has but too vigorously perhaps asserted in *Pacchiarotto*, and so felicitously shown in *Date and Dabitur*. It may be better in these oily days of minds as well as railway-trains advancing without friction, to be somewhat rugged with Browning, Isaiah, Carlyle, &c., than ever smooth with the more popular prophets of lies and delusions.

At this date it requires a downright effort of the mind to realize that *Paracelsus* was published 46 years ago, *Sordello* in 1840, *Christmas Eve and Easter Day* in 1850: and here we are now recommending them and the earliest streams that flowed down to the level of our intelligence from the sunlit mountains of his. It was, in a great measure, through omitting altogether Vol. iii. of the *Dramatic Works*, and taking only the two volumes and *Dramatis Personæ*, that we succeeded in Hampstead in a course of Lectures fifteen years ago, and quickened a good number to appreciate Browning, before he suddenly rose to more general recognition, as he has since that time. This must still be more or less the plan to be pursued. And plenty will remain to be done. But it is one thing to give a lecture on some difficult work; it is quite another thing to get Browning's best works known, loved, enjoyed, and quoted as household words of daily intellectual resource, like Tennyson. I would rather take my chance with *Sordello* than with *The Ring and the Book*. We were, at any rate, among the "few who must like" the incidents in *that development of a soul*. Taking *Sordello* as the severest part of

our happy task, we felt that it does not share so much of those features which mark the poems published since 1868, at which I stand aghast and bewildered. *Sordello* is far more *quotable*; rhyme tends to make the sentences shorter; and they never run out as cable to the length of a whole page or more, as in *The Ring and the Book*. I have not time to speak especially upon *Sordello*, with its innumerable beauties, its luxuriant excesses, as of vegetable and animal life in an American forest. It comprises a wider grasp, deeper fathoming, and higher scaling, in the development of a soul, than *Paracelsus*. But most of Browning's poems might have the sub-title of Incident or Incidents in the development of a soul. The task laid upon our attention by fulness and rapidity of thought is peculiarly in *Sordello* a stimulating difficulty to be dealt with, and ends in satisfaction and enhanced degrees of pleasure. Ruskin says, in reference to *The Bishop ordering his tomb in S. Praxed's Church*, "The worst of it is that this kind of concentrated writing needs so much *solution* before the readers can fairly get the good of it, that people's patience fails them, and they give up the thing as insoluble: though truly it ought to be to the current of common thought like Saladin's talisman, dipped in clear water, not soluble altogether, but making the element medicinal." ('M. P.' vol. iv. 379.) All that Ruskin has said on Browning ought to be quoted in full. There are, however, other features besides *concentration* in Browning's later works about which time would not allow me to speak otherwise than inadequately now. Some one will have the delight of exhibiting his great gift of *humour*, which is one that allies him so truly with Shakespeare; and which, inextricably interwoven with seriousness, Carlyle, in reference to Richter, describes as the last finish and perfection of the human faculties. Often Browning reminds us of Richter also in his sudden and surprising illustrations. Let future speakers take a text for vindication of those twenty years of personal rule that were the ruin of France; or extract the "pleasure" that is supposed to be an ingredient in reading poetry, the gentleness and the sweetness, from *Pacchiarotto*: while some of us, who cannot bear that Jupiter should frown so, or Apollo gather such black clouds around his glory,

"For fear creep into acorn-cups and hide us there,"

lest there should be a ray or a shadow of allusion to such minds as our own. Not only the later poems, however, but perhaps every poem of Browning's "must be read three times to be understood." You *must* always "image the whole, then execute the parts." Coleridge says he read the 'Pilgrim's Progress' three times, first as a theologian, secondly with devotional feelings, thirdly as a poet. ('Table Talk,' p. 89.) Whether thrice or more, there is an order in which Browning must be

read by one who has to be *charmed* into appreciating him. The first sign of that order is the separation already insisted on, between those poems and extracts which may be read with pleasure and infinite advantage, and those which I fear no power nor a score of Browning Societies will ever make *popular*, or acceptable with ordinary minds backed by only ordinary leisure in these rapid days, and an average degree of perseverance. *Albeit there is, even in our day, a higher merit than popularity: although you cannot get more than one in a thousand to own as much.*

It may sound foolish to put poems *in rank* like modern symmetrical bouquets of flowers or buds: but it is an old philosophy, still essential, to advance from the easy to the difficult, if poetry is to be a serious and elevating enjoyment for the head and the heart. We may even applaud the judgment of that selection which takes *From Ghent to Aix*, and the *Pied Piper* as suitable for Penny Readings. And I may add, *Date and Dabitur* is an admirable little gem for children to learn by heart, and many children I am concerned with know it well. But for adults, *begin with Rabbi Ben Ezra*, one of the very noblest modern religious moral poems, swallowing up in light that miserable shadow of the faithless coldness of the times cast in the doubt, "Is life worth living?" If a man does not value that, let him alone: he is no better than one of the dolls Jean Paul made for his children with a Sultana raisin put in for a soul. Why has not our glorious poet given us more like that? Minerva leaps from the brain with all the varieties of Proteus, as we pass to quite other poems. They say, in our less classical times, poets have poems born, as ladies have beautiful children; and for inscrutable reasons the last may not be as beautiful as the last-but-one. *Rabbi Ben Ezra* and *Prospice* are as two guiding angels of subdued effulgence which conduct a man to *Childe Roland*. This is such an absolutely unique effort of genius, constructed every line and word even with such happy art, that I won't speak about it now, as I am under the responsibility of giving it a separate treatment as my favourite poem. Then *Abt Vogler*, for a person having any music in his soul. And *Caliban*, the identical Caliban of Shakespeare, the hairy ancestor of all the theologians and philosophers, with his keen eyes, perched on a rock's edge, of Sir Noel Paton; the Caliban in his speculating spirit into which Browning has thrown himself as completely as into *Protus* or *Johannes Agricola*, without a single flash of thought incongruous to that undeveloped piece of humanity, who gives us a treasury of the natural history in the island, and of unconscious felicities as piercing as his own eyes, as well as of *that natural philosophy* beyond which we ourselves could never have

emerged, if such a guiding star had never risen on us as Tennyson's, that

"Nothing is which errs from law ;"

nor S. John's sunlight that "God is love." No preacher ever gave a grander sermon on a Scripture text than *that* is on Psalm I. 21. Following so reluctantly this idea of successive arrangement, or even taking *intelligibility* as the great merit, yet if it be

"Weakness to be wroth with weakness,"

take *Christmas Eve*, which is intelligible enough ; and if enjoyed on *Saturday*, Dec. 24, by the time Lent-lilies are out the weaker brethren might venture into *Easter Day*, which is more abstruse. Any one can understand *Saul*, and the *Arabian Physician*, the *Boy and the Angel*, and *Holy Cross Day : and then Paracelsus*, which is not at all difficult to any one who can at all harmonize with Browning's marvellously versatile genius in his striking selection of subjects, and can become accustomed to his glorious plenitude of thought with lesser degrees of his abstruseness. This is low ground indeed to take : but we must not forget that the prejudice to be overcome is against the extreme difficulty of following him without headaches, and with a chance of real enjoyment. Suppose we offered ourselves as guides to Switzerland, with similarly graduated guarantees that *enjoyment* may be had from flowers, forests, and valleys, as well as intellectual elevation from sublime mountains and wondrous glaciers ! These poems named above ought to convince any one (out of Colney Hatch) that he is sitting at the feet of a wonderful poet, who will richly repay all further efforts bestowed on a fuller acquaintance. And we who have patiently to labour in teaching and raising others, and cannot expect them at once to follow us in all our intellectual soaring with eagles' wings (or Icarus-wings) must forbearingly sympathize with those limited abilities and pardonable aversions, that can never appreciate (and more than a small minority of readers never will) such poems as *P. Hohenstiel-Schwangau* and *Pacchiarotto*, or even *The Ring and the Book*, or *Sordello*. The thing to maintain is that such incomparable poetry as is steadily gaining its deserved popularity, or *will* through the impetus of this Society, is not more widely different from the other class, is not less in amount comparatively, or lower in comparative excellence of artistic finish, than Wordsworth's 'Ode on Immortality' is compared with his wearisome drivelling pedlars, or the valued and unvalued portions of many another poet's writings.

I will now conform to my title by drawing attention to three of the greatest *characteristics* of Browning's poetry and philosophy, which have hitherto received either utterly inadequate recognition or none at all. First, Music : second, Art : third, Christianity.

1. *Take Music First*. He is a born musician, and a cultivated musician,

as to the history, the laws, and the compositions, of music. No other poet has ever ventured to occupy such a position.

"His magic may not copied be:
For in that circle none durst walk but he."

The spiritual transcendentalism of music, the inscrutable relation between the seen and the eternal, of which music alone unlocks the gates by inarticulate expression, has never had an articulate utterance from a poet before *Abt Vogler*. This is of a higher order of composition, quite nobler, than the merely fretful rebellion against the earthly condition imposed here below upon heavenly things, seen in *Master Hugues*. In that and other places, I am not sure that persons of musical attainment, as distinguished from musical *soul and sympathy*, do not rather find a professional gratification at the technicalities, as

"those lesser thirds so plaintive,
sixths diminished, sigh on sigh . . .
those commiserating sevenths . . ."
(*A Toccata of Galuppi's.*)

as curiosities, and phenomena of music being reduced to words at all; as again the five parts of a fugue,

"What with affirming, denying,
Holding, risposting, subjoining, . . .
So your fugue broadens and thickens
Greatens and deepens and lengthens. . ."
(*Master Hugues.*)

or the peculiarities of composers, &c., than get conducted to "the law within the law." But in *Abt Vogler*, the understanding is spell-bound, and carried on the wings of the emotions, as Ganyমে in the soft down of the eagle, into the world of spirit. Compare what any one else has written on music. Cowper's

"With easy force it opens all the cells where memory slept."

Wordsworth's fiddling

"in the street that from Oxford has borrowed its name,"

Dryden's Odes, so overpraised; even the Poet Laureate's

"little sharps and trebles."

The beautiful utterances of Richter alone approach to the value of Browning's on music. Well does he deserve remembrance for the remark, that "Music is the only language incapable of expressing anything impure," and for many others. They all, comparatively, speak from outside; Browning speaks from inside, as if an angel came to give all the hints we could receive,

"of that imperial palace whence we came."

He speaks of music as Dante does of Heaven, Hell, and Purgatory,

because he has been there. Even the musical Milton, whose best line is,

"In linked sweetness long drawn out." (*L'Allegro*.)

whose best special treatment of music is in the occasional Poem, '*At a solemn music*,' has given us nothing of the nature of *Abt Vogler*. It should be perfectly learnt by heart; and it will be ever whispering analogies to the soul in daily life. Because, of course, the mystery of life and the mystery of music make one of the most fundamental transcendental harmonies breathed into our being. We may even correlate Shakespeare here. For the 5th Act of '*M. of Venice*,' which comes nearest, gives us briefly the mighty secret, which is so marvellously organised in *Abt Vogler*. This requires a treatment by itself, and a sympathetic notice of all the "*curiosa felicitas*," the many revelations subordinate to the one keynote, "It is all triumphant art, but art in obedience to laws." *The Heretic's Tragedy* has been but slightly noticed, and for 'the demoniac malignity of persecution' generally condemned; less noticed in its ecclesiastical aspect, or its solemn moral retribution, in such strange surprise reasserting its forgotten omnipotence in the dead stagnation of corrupt ages; for its musical value quite unnoticed. It deserves a Handel to compose fit music for it, as a most solemn oratorio. Yet one *Review* placidly notices *this*, among the poems which make the reader shudder, by the physical or moral horrors they set before him, as "culminating in the burning alive of a man before a slow fire."

We might observe his equal sympathy with Hephzibah tune in the little chapel, and the organ in S. Peter's at Rome swallowing up the sense of time:

"Earth breaks up, time drops away;
In flows heaven with its new day
Of endless life." (*C. E.* 10.)

A curious instance of his adopting classical mythology long seemed to me a case of imagination at the expense of accuracy, until I hit upon the explanation:

"Like some huge throbbing-stone, that poised a-joint
Sounds to affect on its basaltic bed,
Must sue in just one accent," &c., 10 lines. *Sordello*, ii, 450-460.

I suppose the allusion is to the stone upon which Apollo laid his lyre while he was at work rebuilding Megara; and which was henceforth capable of giving only a sound similar to that of the lyre. *Uhland* has a sonnet on the legend. While speaking of Browning's most musical genius it sounds very paradoxical, when it is perpetually dinned into our ears that he is not a master of *rhythm*. One discriminating *Review* ('*B. Q.*' Nov. '47) says "he is neither a deep thinker nor a musical writer. He is certainly not a born singer: he wants the melody and the grace of

which verse should be made. At the same time he occasionally pours forth a strain of real melody. He is rather a thinker than a singer. . .” Yet see the generosity of a reviewer who believes but feebly in the existence of either *Bells* or *Pomegranates*, concluding his estimate of all Browning's poetry by quoting THE WHOLE OF *How they brought the good news from Ghent to Aix*. I venture the opposite opinion, that however reckless or defiant he may be in the elaboration of form, he has a far wider and more commanding versatility of rhythm than Tennyson. The rhythm of *Ghent to Aix* has admirably caught the rapidity of galloping for very life. *As I ride* has just the wavy motion of a creature's back. Ruggedness is sometimes as essential to the subject as smoothness at other times. I may allude to the gentle flowing of

“Thus the Mayne glideth, Where my love abideth ;”

at which soothing undertones Paracelsus' darkness passes

“Like some dark snake that force may not expel,
Which glideth out to music sweet and low.”

The subdued tone of calm, so exquisitely pathetic, of that plaint,

“I hear a voice, perchance I heard,
Long ago but all too low. . .” (*Paracelsus*, p. 41.)

and the sweet melancholy deliberateness of the song there, where you *must obey* the four beats of each line in order to read it properly, as when there are only four words, or even three, in a line.

“Lost, | lost | yet | come | . . .

“Re- | proach | to | thee | ”

This time-test also applies to the beautiful legend of *The Boy and the Angel*. Or compare the three couplets descriptive of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven, so happily distinct :

“Dante, pacer of the shore	
Where glutted hell disgorgeth filthiest gloom,	}
Unbitten by its whirring sulphur-spume ;	
Or whence the grieved and obscure waters slope	
Into a darkness quieted by hope ;	
Plucker of amaranths grown beneath God's eye	
In gracious twilights where His chosen lie.”	} <i>Sordello</i> , i. 366-372.

The *cortège* of the *Grammarians' Funeral* steps to the tune of that noble requiem of a Scaliger or some Prince of bookworms, as much as the iambic lightness of the *Pied Piper* with its variations suits its own subject. Compare the two parts of *Holy-Cross Day* ; with the humour, the scorn of the first, and the placid dignity of a sublime faith in *Ben Ezra's Song of Death*. This poem, on other grounds, has been most blindly depreciated. It is a *capital test-poem* of a gift which little minds eminently lack, but which is very characteristic of *genius* (and its brother *madness*), the *ability* for sudden transitions. Some persons have no con-

ception of the natural ability to laugh one moment, and to be perfectly solemn and reverential the next; nor can they discern (*e. g.* 'C. Rev.' Feb. '67) the artistic power of the contrast given by

"the festering squalor of the Ghetto"

as background for the indestructible trust in the ancient writings of the Hebrew prophets. They shrink less from the facts than from the tragical record of them. Browning may well retort in the language of Dryden (Preface to Fables): "*Prior læsit* is justification sufficient in the civil law": or better still in Milton's paraphrase of Sophocles:

"'Tis you that say it, not I. You do the deeds,
And your ungodly deeds find me the words." *Electra*, 624-5.

We may add to this branch of the subject such secondary marks of rhythmical structure as *time-beats*, with noble indifference, or freedom of a bird's wings in the air, as to *syllables* in the ordinary five-foot lines. Even the rhyme he has imposed on himself so unaccountably in the long epic of *Sordello* is no fettering whatever. He simply revels in his inexhaustible wealth of rhyming, one, two, or three-syllable rhymes. Nevertheless we cannot help feeling a greater steadiness and measure in the earlier compositions. Compare *Paracelsus* with any of the more recent narratives wherein lines are the mere warp for the terribly subtle woof of metaphysical analysis. Care rather marks the first period, and recklessness the second. But for a poet who spurns the thought of the number of syllables in a line, I presume to take exception (*salvâ reverentiâ*) to the irksome mannerism of 'i' and 'o' for *in* and *of*. I counted, *Colenso*-like, or *Furnivall*-like, the number of 'i' and 'o' cases in *The Ring and the Book*, and other poems, but have mislaid my bag of winnowed chaff. Why should we be ashamed of English prepositions, more than of the *enclitic* δε which *ends* a line the Scaligers might object to even over their coffins? The breathless rapidity of the thought for which *little words* shaken out of a pepper-box are rather a nuisance, is no doubt the cause.

"Words have to come: and somehow words deflect
As the best cannon ever rifled do." *H.-Schw.* p. 147.

But all words were perhaps rather a nuisance to Browning's angelic velocity of thought,

"Until . . . Language the makeshift grew
Into the bravest of expedients too." *Sordello*, ii. 179.

Another peculiarity on which my fastidiousness stumbles, so that I can hardly pick up myself *in time* for the sentence, the sense, or the line, is the most strange and immoderate use of the—dash—. It is sometimes equal to a parenthesis; to a stop; sometimes to apposition; sometimes silently suggestive that more might be said; sometimes I cannot gauge

its value. I do not know its proper name, or recognized value, in English Grammar; in Browning it is but dust amidst gold. However, it affronts one scores of times daily, in the outrageous, senseless profusion of employment, in books, in the daily press, in notice bills, before a name, after a complete sentence, anywhere, everywhere; a plague that has worried me in correcting print till I have made a pact that it shall not be used for me: fretting one sometimes,

"As its mates do, the midge and the nit,—

Through minuteness to wit. The gravamen's in that!" *Instans Tyrannus.*

2. *Art.* It is an omission hitherto that no art-critic has given us a fit notice of, or more than slight allusions to, Browning's poetry on Art. Browning's Italian soul in his "myriad-minded" genius could not but throw itself much into Art. And his Art-poems are as great contributions to our understanding of the moral principles, and the religious principles, of Art, as Ruskin's poetical prose is. His business is, as Fra Lippo says, "to paint the souls of men." Painting, Music, Verse, are but three cognate languages, of which the last may even be sometimes most inadequate to its high object. *Art* covers the three.

"Poet and painter are proud in the artist list enrolled."

In the sketch of the Florentine monk not only do we have most powerfully conceived the religious obligations of art, and the desperate attempt at compromise between the highest efforts of genius and the irregularities of the lower nature, as if the one could pay off arrears with God for the other, or as if every artist were a double personality, doomed to the Mezentian punishment that S. Paul takes as the type of the two laws striving within: but also, because of these features, one great inward contradiction of spirit traces so sad an account of all that highly overstrung humanity which includes so many bright names; suns darkened with sunspots on their discs; Bacon, Turner, Byron, Handel; painters, musicians, poets, philosophers. I mention this, because the essential Browning in the art-poems is not only, nor so much, the art-critic, but the exponent of *the religious aspect of art*, the conscience in discord or harmony, of the relation to God in his art as well as in his life, in Rafael, Giotto, Andrea del Sarto, and in the Florentine painters all, as truly as in *Paracelsus*. As to judging of pictures, "Poets, and men of strong feeling in general, are apt to be among the very worst judges of painting. The slightest hint is enough for them. . . Thus Wordsworth writes many sonnets to Sir G. Beaumont and Haydon, none to Sir Joshua or to Turner." (*Ruskin*. 'M. P.' iii. 138-9.) But "Browning is unerring in every sentence he writes of the Middle Ages; always vital, right, and profound: so that in the matter of art, there is hardly a principle connected with the mediæval temper that he has not struck upon,

in those seemingly careless and too rugged lines of his. (Quotation from *S. Praxed's Church*.) I know no other piece of modern English, prose or poetry, in which there is so much told, as in these lines, of the Renaissance spirit,—its worldliness, inconsistency, pride, hypocrisy, ignorance of itself, love of art, of luxury, and of good Latin. It is nearly all that I said of the central Renaissance in thirty pages of the 'Stones of Venice' put into as many lines, Browning's being also the antecedent work." ('M. P.' iii. 377-379.) This subject, which is too technical to be more than just touched now, is however of vital importance, as lying at the root of our whole estimate of Browning. When we consider that he is ever making incandescent, visible, and illuminating, as by powerful electric current, the dark line of *conscience* running through all the workings of genius, and asserting painting, music, and poetry to be but three allied forms of one spirit, the Art of Expression or Intimation from soul to soul:

("Art was given for that :
God uses us to help each other so,
Lending our minds out." *Fra Lippi*.)

how far are we authorized in applying the moral philosopher's test to *his own art*? Are we to consider all his poems finished works of art, each in proportion to its ideal? Certainly not by the test of *smoothness*, or *finish* as many would call it. For there is an *art-canon* in that capital verse,

"Grand rough old Martin Luther
Bloomed fables, flowers on furze :
The better the uncouthier :
Do roses stick like burrs?"

The poems already named, *Ben Ezra*, *Abt Vogler*, *Childe Roland*, *Paracelsus*, *Caliban*, *Holy Cross Day*, *The Heretic's Tragedy*, no one could deny to be carefully-wrought works of art. There is further quite a revelation, especially for the "pickers up of learning's crumbs," in the numerous *alterations*, which must needs suggest carefulness of reconsideration, and elaboration, in some poems; in the niceness which could *change* lepidoptera to coleoptera in *Easter Day*, 6; and especially in that industrious collection of changes made by the devotedness of Mr. Furnivall and others from *Sordello*. But if, on this theory, which he himself has gauged in the Dedication of *Sordello*, we are to consider all the *later* works equally works of art, each according to its kind, free of mere defiance of stupid criticism, free of entanglement in the webs of his own extraordinary facilities: then, it may be, we have even yet much to learn, as I have already hinted, about the elasticity, comprehensiveness, possible development and even generosity, to be allowed to the word *Poetry*, adorning as it does the brows of gods and men, the

heads of chirping cicale and many drowsy insects secular and religious. I would presume to deprecate as untrue rather than ungenerous Mr. W. Bagehot's comparisons of grotesque with pure art and ornate. *Holy Cross Day* is chosen, with *Caliban*, to illustrate "not the *success* of grotesque art but the nature of it." Under which of the three epithets are we to range *criticism* which concludes an estimate of Browning with three-fourths of the *Pied Piper* as "the best and most satisfactory instance"? *Caliban* is selected, to be called "not a normal type but an abnormal specimen." I wish this were true. Why, Shakespeare's Caliban is a higher type of humanity, as possible to rise, than Trinculo who has sunk into low habits as vile as the bog. I fear there are whole tribes of Calibans, not only in still-vest Bermoothes. There is a Caliban in each of us. Browning could not have painted that picture without the touch of Caliban which makes the whole world kin. Ask Mr. Charles Darwin about this!

3. *Christianity*. I must claim for Browning the distinction of being pre-eminently the greatest Christian poet we have ever had. Not in a narrow dogmatic sense, but as the teacher who is as thrilled-through with all Christian sympathies as with artistic or musical. A man whose very genius is to identify himself, for the nonce, with each human soul he enters, and makes to speak to us, must necessarily find his profoundest, fullest harmony in souls alive with Christian faith and experience, questions and conflicts. I hold very light that solicitude to know and tabulate what his own system of truth is. I cannot sympathize with the intrusive deduction as to what Browning himself is. "The longer I live," says Jean Paul, "the more I find I have to determine *to unlearn systems*." "Je länger ich lebe, desto mehr verlern' ich das Gelernte, nämlich die Systeme." (December, 1820. 'Wahrheit aus J. P.'s Leben,' ii. 140.) He could not adopt a character, and would not select it, unless he could become one with it by inward affinity. How can you get at Shakespeare who is as truly Falstaff as he is King Lear; Iago as much as Othello? He is humanity. So is Browning religion: with all forms of art, philosophy, and experience as her ministers. It would be astounding to observe how utterly ignored he is in this his deepest innermost being (as far as it is revealed to us as his very self) were it not that we are fully, however painfully, aware, of the petty antipathies, the poor miserable sufficiency of intelligence, and the feeble reiterations of truisms or sentimentalities, that myriads of sincere Christian people allow in their favourite religious literature. Well may *M. Arnold* say that poetry is a monument of a nation's strength, religious poetry of a nation's weakness. What do the *childlike worshippers* of Keble, Cowper, Dr. Watts, know of *Browning*, or

even of *Blake*? The Church never did know its most glorious sons, since it first stoned the prophets, till now that it extols the vapid, thin, milk-and-water runlets called religious poetry. How much might be burnt with impunity to make a light to read *Christmas Eve and Easter Day* by? Browning himself, by-the-bye, speaks in that. The incomparable sermon on the charity that dare not condemn any school of religious thought, lest it lose eternal hold on the *salvation of the Vest*; the preference, worthy of the firmest believer in Christian doctrine, for Zion Chapel or superstitious Rome over the negative vacuum of the learned skeptic, and the splendid consummation of *E. Day* so closely resembling the well-known crisis in *Faust*: these are the grandest special tributes poet ever brought to Christianity.

In this spiritual relation, and also for another reason, I may observe here, we might arrange an impressive little selection of *descriptive* pieces; descriptive of objects in nature. First and foremost of these would be the sublime description of the lunar rainbow (*Ch. Eve*, 6 and 7), although the actual detail has been called in question of "the seven proper colours chorded." I could hardly believe that so infallible an observer as he is would run so flagrant a risk, if this were indeed beyond the bounds of possibility. There, the transition from apparition to imagination,

"Whose foot shall I see emerge?"

is worthy of Moses or Ezekiel. I have never seen it noticed how this finally merges into what rather belongs to the *aurora borealis*. We must have seen the pictures, many of us have seen the reality, "of the sight, Of a sweepy garment vast and white, With a hem that I could recognize." This is most beautifully interwoven with the account of the woman who touched the hem of Christ's garment; and is retained as the emblem of saving correspondence with heaven, throughout the poem, and in several other places. It may be worth while to observe how similarly Goethe employs the same emblem for *Faust*, as the corporeal Helena vanishes and her clothes pass into clouds. (2 Part, Act iii. Sc. 4.) Then the astonishingly graphic description of the sunset sky with its black and ruddy ripples infinite over the whole dome of heaven, in *Easter Day*, 15. How often have we seen that sky since, as not even Ruskin had opened our eyes to observe!

It is *Paracelsus* as *alter Luther*, who is unfolded, aspiring, failing, attaining; not the charlatan that any one may despise. However utterly different from Tennyson's two sonnets on Lazarus in 'In Memoriam,' the strange experience of the *Arab Physician* is no less magnificent a monument in honour of John xi. The finely-introduced comparison of the blue-flowering borage, and the involuntary dominance of that

overwhelming thought which is like the moon heaving along the tide before the sun rises in the morning as light :

"The very God! think Abib: dost thou think?
So the All-great were the All-loving too!"

is of the very highest order both of meditation and of composition. Closely resembling that is the dazzled bewilderment of Cleon in the blaze of nobler truth than Athens ever taught, which he cannot reject and yet cannot receive. These are two admirably portrayed instances of the way in which Christian truth wrought in the minds of the intellectual, while it simply converted simpler minds to the faith. Which of us ever preached such a sermon on doing God's will, as *The Boy and the Angel*? It is having revealed to us the working of a human soul to the truest advantage of our own, if we go with John to the close of his century of a life of love, to that "thought extracted from a world of thinking" (*Bp. Gambold*), God is love; or listen to the persiflage of *B. Blougram*; or point the rebuke to the lust of gold with the *Legend of Porric*; or arouse the listless indolence of dilettanti professing Christians by the unexpected moral of *The Statue and the Bust*. The most beautiful of all his lyrical romances is *Saul*. In a word, the religious poetry, as I may perhaps call it, as distinct from the art-poetry and the metaphysical-narrative, ought to startle Christian people into elevation and gratitude. It is a fact that cannot be slurred over, that our two great poets maintain their dominion over the affections of their countrymen, not by sheer power of thinking, mere granite depths and height of mind; but by the relation of their main convictions to Christian truth, to holy and eternal emotions, to the moral workings of the heart and conscience; whether in *Paracelsus*, or the *Artist*, or *Fifine*, or *In Memoriam*. Intellectual subtlety and pre-eminence, on Shelley's ground of denial and antipathy, could not attain, not to say retain, the hold they have upon us. It is the high priest of religious life whose beautiful garment is fringed with *Bells and Pomegranates* (*Exod. xxviii. 33, 34*). The emblem is first taken from Aaron's robe: although I don't see that noticed anywhere. Take away the religious tissue from Browning's tapestry, with its vast variety of figures, and almost every one would be a *caput mortuum*. But lest the designation *Christian* should seem too exclusive, we may say that his whole soul is orb'd round the central thought of *God*, and man's relation to God. He is as suffused with the thought of God, as Spinoza was: or

"As saffron tinges flesh, blood, bones, and all."

Not only in *Pope Theocrite*, but in *Instans Tyrannus*, *Andrea del Sarto* as much as *Saul*, *The Grammarian*, and on to the arraignment of the soul before the last judgment-seat in *Easter Day*, the

relation to God is the consummated impression left. And this is the inmost secret of another element that has received more attention. Because God is ever revealing and hiding Himself, beaming out and withdrawing behind impenetrable cloud, therefore all mental workings are traced on towards eternity, never ending in to-day and to-day's thought. Time and eternity are not "lumped together." Only bunglers lug in *eternity*, and scatter the huge word about "like lumps of marl on a barren moor, encumbering what it is not in their power to fertilize." But they are interwoven, or so subtly interlinked, that the soul's working is a sort of golden chain traced from its anchoring in the hidden depths of the soul, onwards towards the throne of God. It is intimated as running into the infinite, though not in all cases tracked along the same distance thitherward. This is one chief secret of Browning's being the poet not only of religious, but of thoughtful, persons; and of the intense sympathy we have with him; and of his being essentially an exponent of the best movements of English mind in this age. Without that he could not be so. Shelley might have become so, had he lived as Browning suggests; but he did not. Still, it is by no means necessary to agree with Browning's over-specialized religious views. Certainly all here present cannot do so.

Finally: among the objects which I anticipate as of real value to us who gratefully reverence Browning, because we feel so deeply indebted to the

"Poet whose thoughts enrich the blood of the world,"

and also to those whose mere ignorance of him without prejudice has left them hitherto strangers to his wealth, are such as these:

A separate treatment of special poems which need a key; being enigmatical, as *Childe Roland*; or

"a pomegranate full of many kernels,"

as *Sordello*; or requiring a pilot through the metaphysical high seas, as *The Ring and the Book*. Treatises on his humour: his attitude towards science: the poems of a class, as *Music*, *Painting*, *Art*: or the *Love Poems*, as Mr. Nettleship has already written. (Although, I can almost wish sometimes *Love* had never been specialized for poets, or cast her sun-suffused cloud around their clear minds; were it not for such glow as of that beautiful and touching invocation, *Ring and Book, Part I.*) And next, short introductions to such poems as hardly require a separate treatment, giving the "Argument" as it is called. And then a Lexicon of names, remote allusions, learned things fetched from somewhere in the universe where he has been, and other mortal foot hath ne'er or rarely been. A devoted admirer of Jean Paul did that very

inadequately for *his* writings; and the explanations of English allusions are highly amusing. Then the organizing of readings, or courses of lectures, with reasonably competent lecturers. And a *digest of Reviews*, which are the queerest milestones along the course of Browning's popularity that a traveller on his own Rosinante could pass or imagine. These would be real helps, worthy of the dignity of a living poet free of all that emasculating popularity which Carlyle so vigorously deprecates, worthy of ourselves, and worthy of the sensible practical object we have in view.

There will still remain that which no such helps can impart, for

"Therein the patient must minister to himself;"

the soul's own intense sympathy with his teacher; his keen enjoyment and noblest pleasure under "love's intellectual law;" the enriching of his memory and ennobling of his moral being, the survey of life, and growth towards attaining the attitude of *Prospice*. No one can read Browning without being immensely benefited, both in his intellect and his heart. Coleridge was not the last to complain, "The indisposition, nay the angry aversion *to think*, even in persons who are most willing to attend, is the fact that ever forces itself on my notice afresh." So, after all our efforts, there will still remain a large number to whom we can wave the hand for farewell:

"Vex not thou the poet's mind
With thy shallow wit:
Vex not thou the poet's mind,
For thou canst not fathom it."

But not he more than Milton need disdain the condition to which all teachers a head taller than their fellows are subject,

"And fit audience find though few."

Were he shallow instead of subtle, and had he dabbled in summer pools instead of fathoming the depths of the soul and eternity, he would have had the sickening incense of steaming popularity in his nostrils. But

"I love him, on this side idolatry, as much as any".

Or, to throw a last arrow feathered with his own words at him, we may reverentially contemplate him as

"Still loftier than the world suspects,
Living and dying."

V. ON "PIETRO¹ OF ABANO"AND THE LEADING IDEAS OF "DRAMATIC IDYLS," SECOND
SERIES 1880.

BY THE REV. J. SHARPE, M.A.

(Read at the 2nd Meeting of the Browning Society. Friday, Nov. 25, 1881.)

Structure of the Poem. (Dram. Idyls, II, p. 63—111.)

p.	Part i.	Stanzas i—v.	(first lines)
p. 68.	" ii.	" vi—xxii.	'Now as on a certain evening.'
p. 82.	" iii. scene (1)	" xxiii—xxxiii.	'Presently the young man.'
p. 92.	" scene (2)	" xxxiv—xl.	'Gone again—what, is he?'
p. 102.	" scene (3)	" xlv—li.	''Tis my own soul soars now.'
p. 107.	" iv.	" lii—liv.	'What was changed?'
	Epilogue.	" lv—lvi.	'When these parts Tiberius.'

¹ Peter of A'bano—*Petrus de A'pono* or *Aponensis*, or *Petrus de Padua*—was an Italian physician and alchemist, born at Abano near Padua in 1246, died about 1320. He is said to have studied Greek at Constantinople, mathematics at Padua, and to have been made Doctor of Medicine and Philosophy at Paris. He then returned to Padua, where he was Professor of medicine, and followed the Arabian physicians, especially Averroes. He got a great reputation, and charged enormous fees. He hated milk and cheese, and swooned at the sight of them. His enemies, jealous of his renown and wealth, denousted him to the Inquisition as a magician. They accused him of possessing the Philosopher's Stone, and of making, with the Devil's help, all money spent by him come back to his purse, &c. His trial was begun; and had he not died naturally in time, he would have been burnt. The Inquisitors ordered his corpse to be burnt; and as a friend had taken that away, they had his portrait publicly burnt by the executioner. In 1560 a Latin epitaph in his memory was put up in the church of St. Augustin. The Duke of Urbino set his statue among those of illustrious men; and the Senate of Padua put one on the gate of its palace, beside those of Livy, &c. His best known work is his *Conciliator differentiarum quæ inter philosophos et medicos versantur*; Mantua, 1472, and Venice, 1476, fol., often reprinted. Other works are: 1. *De venenis, eorumque remediis*, tr. into French by L. Boet; Lyons, 1593, 12mo; 2. *Geomantia*; Venice, 1505, 1556, 8vo; 3. *Expositio problematum Aristotelis*; Mantua, 1475, 4to; 4. *Hippocratis de medicorum astrologia libellus*, in Gr. and Lat.; Venice, 1485, 4to; 5. *Astrolabium planum in tabulis ascendens, continens qualibet hora atque minuta æquationes domorum cæli*, &c.; Venice, 1502, 4to; 6. *Diocnides, digestus alphabetico ordine*; Lyon, 1512, 4to; 7. *Heptameron*; Paris, 1474, 4to; 8. *Textus Mesue noviter emendatus*, &c.; Venice, 1505, 8vo; 9. *Decisiones physionomicæ*, 1548, 8vo; 10. *Quæstiones de febribus*; Padua, 1482; 11. *Galenii tractatus varii a Petro Paduano, latinitate donati*; MS. in S. Mark's Library, Venice; 12. *Les éléments pour opérer dans les sciences magiques*; MS. in the Arsenal Library, Paris—*Nouvelle Biographie Universelle*. Paris, 1855, i. 29-31.
—F.

Part i, stanzas i—v. *Description of Peter.*

PETRUS APONENSIS is a magician. He has boundless power and knowledge; he uses both for the good of men: yet he not only fails to win gratitude, but is met with curses, insult, and persecution. If he works under some disguise in the hope of earning gratitude, the moment he is detected he is denounced as a wizard, and driven away by those whom he has benefited. Why is it that a man at once so powerful, wise, and beneficent, should yet fail to win in return even a little gratitude, not to say love? In the answer lies the idea which this poem is intended to illustrate.

'Si vis amari, ama,' said Hecaton. (Sen. Ep. i. 9.) Love is won only by love, and love involves self-sacrifice. Men cannot love Peter, for they see that he does not love them. Though his acts are beneficent, they are no proofs of love, for they cost him nothing; they are wrought by a word and by magic power, not by any sacrifice. Thus, as Democritus said, 'he who loves none, will be loved by none.'

Part ii, stanzas vi—xxii, p. 68. 'Now as on a certain evening,'

The clever Greek.

As Peter is entering his house he is stopped by a young man, a Greek, clever, and imbued with the spirit of Greek philosophy. He tells Peter that he does not believe the vulgar stories current concerning him. He has a boon to beg, that Peter will gratify the purest of ambitions, to make him a great poet, so that he may make his kind wise, free, and happy. This he purposes to do by fictions suited to the ignorant crowd, by apparent truths which to them seem good; by gratifying their low aims, he will use them for his own ends.

He illustrates his meaning by reference to architecture. The king who has the palace built seeks his own glory, the workmen seek merely for wages, but the architect uses the low aims of both to display his own power, and has in the end all the credit. Human fame, however, is nothing compared with the consciousness of power; nay, even persecution is nothing to the sage who is conscious that he and he only is the real ruler of the world.

The clever Greek anticipates an objection which Peter might raise: 'If I grant your wish how can I be sure that you will not turn out ungrateful like the rest?' He replies, 'The vulgar story that you cannot touch milk means that you cannot win 'the milk of human kindness,' human love: now touch my heart and love is yours; the higher you lift me the more I shall love you.' Peter replies that he has often been deceived by such promises; no one yet has ventured to risk anything to save him from persecution. Still he will try again. He throws the

Greek into a trance by magic art, and shows him in three scenes what the future would be, if he were to give the Greek the power he asks.

Peter evidently represents the wise man of the Platonic philosophy. Plato omitted the benevolent affections from his psychological analysis, and Peter has no love for the men whom he benefits. Plato said that the just man will be scourged, racked, and finally crucified, and all because he preferred *being* to *seeming*. So Peter, who does not condescend to disguise his want of feeling, is met with insult and persecution. The clever Greek is the very opposite. He chooses to *seem* rather than to be, and prospers accordingly. (See Plato, *Republic*, book i.)

The clever Greek addressed Peter on the ground of the Platonic philosophy, 'dosed him with the fair and good.' He assumed a fundamental principle of Greek philosophy, viz. truth for the few wise, fiction for the ignorant many. Greek philosophy was vicious at the core: it was based upon pride; self-love was its leading motive. In Peter, self-love took the form of the pride of intellect and conscious power; his reward was that he 'knew himself the mighty man he was.' He is satisfied with the judgment, 'admiracionem incutit.' In the Greek, self-love takes a coarser form.

In neither case is self-love inconsistent with benevolence. Peter exemplifies this in a private station, the Greek in public life. (See *Butler*, sermon xi.) But how different is his conduct from that of true love. He would raise men by being raised above them; true love sinks that it may raise. He would make men happy by indulging their delusions, while he uses them for his own ends; true love imparts truth, and raises others to its own level.

Part iii, stanzas xxiii—li, p. 82. 'Presently the young man.'

The Parasite, the Councillor, and the Pope.

In the visions, the Greek is seen in three stages of his upward-downward career; first he wins wealth, next political power, and lastly spiritual power. At each stage Peter appears and asks for his reward, gradually diminishing his demands. First he asks for a home with the Greek; next for a remote and hidden sanctuary; lastly, that the Greek will edit his literary remains. On the two former occasions the Greek puts off his request upon the plea that his ambition is not yet fully gratified, he acknowledges the debt; but at last as Pope he can rise no higher, and then he refuses to pay. As the Greek has risen higher in the world, he has sunk morally lower; when Peter has raised him to the full height of his ambition, the very acknowledgment of a debt of gratitude is withheld.

Thus the career of the Greek exemplifies the truth, that love is won

only by love; love is not won by the gratification of desires. What is called 'cupboard love' by children is no love, but selfishness disguised. Peter has gratified every wish of the Greek, but failed to touch his heart.

In the *first scene* the Greek shows some regard to conscience, but stifles it by reasoning. Poisons are often useful medicines; so may evil actions be beneficial. The wise man scorns riches and power; yet no one will believe this unless he first wins and then rejects them. He feels therefore justified in the acquisition of wealth by the evil arts of the parasite.

In the *second scene* the Greek's idea of vice betrays a lower moral condition. As we put off silk to climb a tree, so must we lay aside virtue if we would rise in the world. It is hopeless to try and reform the masses, their vices should rather be used as helps by clever men. A horse allows a man to mount him by an ocular delusion, and goes all the better for it; so by making use of the delusions of the crowd the clever man will seize the reins of government, yet greatly to the good of his fellow men.

In the *third scene* the Greek has so far fallen that he puts forth no excuses. He is cleverness without conscience, bare shameless selfishness, gratifying its ambition in that sphere where love and humility should reign.

Thus the small seed of selfishness which lay at the root of ancient philosophy has developed its inevitable consequences.

Part iv, stanzas lii—liv, p. 107. 'What was changed.'

The Awakening.

When the Greek awakes from the vision his judgment is that at length he knows cheese from chalk, *i. e.* being from seeming, true love from self-love. Peter's ultimate fate was not martyrdom; he had not the love which is needed for self-sacrifice. The future of the Greek is only hinted at; cleverness uncurbed by conscience will give him all that earth can give, but there is no record of his gaining it.

The leading idea of the volume.

The introductory verses contrast the difficulty we find in assigning the cause of bodily disease, with the assurance and positiveness with which we pass judgment upon a human soul. In such a complicated unity as the human soul, many motives are working at once, and actions may be due to motives of a character exactly opposite to the character of the action.

The idyls present us with six actions of this kind.

Yet though the difficulty of fixing the motive is clearly recognized, each idyl gives us the means of ascertaining the motive.

I. The *first idyl* deals with patriotic action. Miltiades and Themistocles are recognized types of patriotism. We do not hesitate to ascribe their conduct at Marathon and Salamis to pure love of the fatherland. But can this be sustained in the light of subsequent history? In the attack on Paros, Miltiades used the power of his country to gratify his own vindictive feelings. Themistocles was guilty of Medism, and lived as a pensioner of his country's foe. How then can we be sure that at Marathon they fought for pure love of country, and not to gratify ambition, to win power or wealth? The true patriot is Echetlos, who refused to tarnish the lustre of his patriotism by any honour or reward¹; but Echetlos is mythical, Miltiades and Themistocles are historical.

II. The *second idyl* deals with an act of courage.

As pure patriotism is found only in the mythical Echetlos, so pure courage exists only in the imagination.

Clive dared certain death rather than tell a lie. Here was an act of heroic courage. Clive faced death fearlessly; but in that very moment he felt a pang of fear, fear of disgrace if his enemy had spared his life. In that case he would have been compelled to escape disgrace by suicide. His friend replies that this would have been an act of courage, to dare to confront God. Soon after, Clive committed suicide. Was this due to courage or to fear?

As on the previous occasion Clive would have committed suicide to escape disgrace, so it is probable his suicide was due to a desire to escape the trouble and disgrace which clouded his latter days. The Clive of the friend's imagination is pure courage; the real Clive is also moved by fear. Clive can charge a battery, but he cannot face a sneer; he is bold toward God, but a coward toward his fellow men.

Some passages of Aristotle's *Ethics* illustrate the courage and fear of Clive (*Eth.* iii. 6). The courageous man fears disgrace. No man is more able than he to endure terrible things, but death is the most terrible of all things. The brave man, however, has to deal only with the most honourable kinds of death, as in war. Suicide is an act of cowardice; for the suicide does not undergo death because it is honourable, but in order to avoid evil. For the sake of what is honourable, the brave man bears and performs those things which belong to courage.

There is a contrast between the bully and Clive. Clive fears man, but not God; the bully fears God, and not man. When the bully sees Clive's resolute adherence to truth in the face of death, he thinks that

¹ Compare Hervé Riel's refusal of any reward for saving the French fleet, save a holiday to see his wife.—F.

Clive would rather go to God's presence with truth upon his lips, than save his life by a lie. Such trust in God and in retribution overpowers him; he dares disgrace among his fellows rather than face the judgment of God. Clive the courageous had no such courage. Moral courage, the special courage of the soldier of Christ, was wanting in the fearless Clive.

We may note how Mr. Browning *more suo* sees the 'soul of goodness in things evil.' This moral courage was displayed by a man who was apparently an utter blackguard, and, like all bullies, a coward at heart.

Thus acts of moral courage are due to fear of God; acts of physical courage may be due to fear of man.

III. The *third idyl* deals with love for an animal.

Love produces the deeds of hate. Hoseyn is on the point of catching up Mulóykeh, when he tells Duhl the secret of her speed, and loses his mare. After refusing a high price, he gives the mare away for nothing to a thief. What could have urged him to act so? Love for his mare: he would rather lose her than have her surpassed; the animal's spirit would never be the same if once conquered; her fame as invincible would have perished. No one who really loved the mare would keep her at such a cost.

(Cynics might say there was a touch of pride at being the owner of an animal never beaten.)

IV. The *fourth idyl* deals with acts of benevolence not due to feelings of benevolence. Both Peter and the Greek benefited mankind; the motive of both was self-love, not love for others. Peter was moved by pride, the Greek by ambition. Peter acts openly and is persecuted; the Greek dissembles and prospers.

"On the great theatre of public life . . . it is much rather the astute statesman, earnest about his ends but unscrupulous about his means, equally free from the trammels of conscience and from the blindness of zeal, who governs, because he partly yields to the passions and prejudices of his time." (Lecky, *Morals*, i. 1.)

V. The *fifth idyl* deals with an act of love and power; but the power is that of hate, not love, and the motive is not the good of the sufferer but the desire to annoy. It is written in Cant. viii. 6, that 'Love is strong as death.' But the opposite of love, hate in its worst form, is stronger than death. 'Corruptio optimi pessima.' Wedded love is best. But Satan cannot love; hence his married life produces the deadliest hate.

VI. The *sixth idyl* deals with an act of love. Pan and Luna are opposite extremes. Pan is half a brute; Luna is purity and modesty.

Pan by a stratagem gets possession of Luna. Does she faint? Does

she flee? Neither; she follows him, 'by no means spurning him.' To what motive shall we attribute her conduct? Certainly not to any want of modesty. Rather to love. Love awakens love. Pan's feelings are such as are described by Seneca, Ep. i. 9, 'Ipse per se amor, omnium aliarum rerum negligens, animos in cupiditatem formæ non sine spe mutæ caritatis accendit.' Pan is not actuated by brute passion, but by Luna's beauty, and the hope of mutual love. This wins her. The godlike element dominates in Pan; bristles and horns count for nothing.

In these idyls we have seen ambition work deeds of patriotism, fear act like courage, love like hate; self-love, ambition, and pride have wrought deeds of benevolence; hate has effected the work of mercy; purity has acted like immodesty.

Hence it is evident, that in judging of the quality of an action, we must pay regard to the motive, and not merely to the outward character of the act. Motive as well as Intended Action is the proper subject of moral intuition. (See Sidgwick, *Method of Ethics*, iii. 1.)

In the closing lines the poet rejects the foolish notion of some of his admirers, that the variety of subjects treated in the idyls is due to the fact that a poet naturally breaks forth into song upon any subject which touches him. Rather his poems are like rocks, hard, forbidding, with few flowers; yet hidden in them is a seed of eternal truth, which time will develop, and posterity will recognize.

One such pine seed I will point out: a living thought which lies hid in the rugged mass of Pietro of Abano.

Students of Browning are aware that when he has illustrated a principle by some apparently trivial example, his method is to apply the principle in the highest sphere of thought.

If God were only Almighty, Allwise, Beneficent, that is, if He were Peter upon an infinite scale, He would fail to win the love of mankind, as Peter did. If God were to grant every wish of man, as Peter granted every wish of the clever Greek, man would not feel even gratitude, much less love Him; just as the Greek failed to love Peter, and at last even denied the debt. For love is won only by love; and love involves self-sacrifice. If God would win the love of man, He must sacrifice Himself; as in the Epistle of Karshish, 'thou must love me who have died for thee.' This is the Christian's faith, 'We love Him because He first loved us.' Here, as so often in Browning, reason leads to the Incarnation of God.

SCRAPS.

Sordello, Bk. i. p. 24, l. 592-9, vol. ii, ed. 1878 (vol. iii. p. 273, ed. 1863). *The goblin or plague out of the coffer*. "So they found at Babylon," &c. See this story in the life of Verus by Julius Capitolinus, *Historiae Augustae Scriptores*, var. ed. 1671, i. 426-27. Compare with it the account given by Ammianus Marcellinus, ed. 1693, lib. xxiii. cap. 6, pp. 402-3. Jul. Cap. says that the pestilence came 'ex arcula aurea'; Am. Marc. adds to J. C.'s version, that the soldiers were looting, and opened 'foramen angustum,' from which the plague issued.—W. G. Stone.

My Star (i. 98, ed. 1863), l. 9. "Then it stops like a bird:" like a bird stops its singing when startled.—Mrs. Nettleship.

Count Gismond: its Story told. 'An orphan girl (who tells her story to a female friend) is brought up by an uncle whose two daughters are envious of their cousin's beauty and accomplishments. Their jealousy reaches such a pitch that it prompts them to urge the betrothed knight of one of them to accuse the beautiful orphan of unchastity. They select the morning of the day when the object of their hatred is to be crowned Queen of the May. The knight accuses her, as prompted by her cousins. Another knight [Count Gismond], who secretly loves the beautiful orphan, gives him the lie; they fight; the traducer is killed, confessing, ere he dies, the plot; and the rescued beauty rewards the noble champion with her hand. When she is relating this, she has been a happy wife and mother for some years' (p. 78-9). . . The following 'stanza is one of the finest in the whole range of poetical painting':—

"He strode to Gautier: in his throat
Gave him the lie, then struck his mouth
With one back-handed blow, that wrote
In blood men's verdict there. North, South,
East, West, I look'd: The lie was dead,
And damn'd; and truth stood up instead."

1849. T. Powell, *Pictures of Living Authors*, p. 80-1.

Hohenstiel-Schwangau, p. 14. "The grim guardian of this Square." The statue of George I. on horseback, then (1871) much knocked about, and since destroyd. It was formerly at Cannons in Hertfordshire.—C. Knight's *London* vi. 71. E. F.—G.

Ib. p. 68. The sneer at "modern Science" is not Browning's own, of course, but just the popular chaff of the day put dramatically into Louis Napoleon's mouth.—F.

'It has always struck me that E. A. Poe's line in *Israfel*,

"Best bard, because the wisest,"

was peculiarly applicable to Mr. Browning. I suggest it as a suitable motto for one of our Society's Publications.'—Helen Zimmern.

VI.

ON BROWNING'S "FIFINE" AT THE FAIR."

BY J. T. NETTLESHIP, ESQ.

To be read at the 4th Meeting of the Browning Society, Friday, Feb. 24, 1882.

THIS paper is divided into four parts. I. Description of the Contents of the Poem. II. An Analysis, section by section; in short, a translation of the Poem into prose. III. A Statement, dividing the main subjects dealt with into three heads. IV. A Synopsis of the whole Poem.

The poem is preceded by a prologue, and succeeded by an epilogue. On the flyleaf preceding the prologue, is a motto, in the form of an extract from the third scene of the first Act of Molière's *Don Juan*, in which Donna Elvira puts her husband to the blush, and treats him with ironical contempt. The body of the poem consists of a monologue by a husband, speaking to his wife whom he names Elvire, in which the husband introduces in quotation marks, and afterwards discusses or answers, certain objections and observations made by his wife on what he has previously said.

I. DESCRIPTION OF THE CONTENTS OF THE POEM.

1. §§ 1-14. A talk about the charm Bohemianism has for its votaries, the troupe of strolling actors.

2. §§ 15-34. The character and charm of Fifine, the dancer and beauty of the troupe, as contrasted with or forming one in a line of beauties, including Elvire.

3. §§ 35-42. The character and charm of Elvire the wife, as contrasted with Fifine and the other beauties, and the nature of her hold on her husband, and his love for her.

4. §§ 43-53. Hence, how every man, by the necessity of his soul's nature, must strive to seek and find the right wife to love.

5. §§ 54-59. How every man must develop his soul for fitness for such a search, by learning the world he lives in, and divining the truth under falseness, the whole from the part seen; and how sooner or later that learning the world will be done, not for the sake of the soul itself, but for love of another soul, and desire to give that soul the result of that learning.

6. §§ 60-63. A justification of the husband's admiration of Fifine, on the ground laid clear in 3-5 inclusive; the husband taking the scene around him and his wife as he speaks, and using it as illustrating the necessity of learning the whole from the part seen.

7. §§ 64-69. A new illustration of the learning of truth through falseness, by the image of a swimmer in the sea, typifying a man in the world; the things he touches in the sea, typifying the Fifines in the world. What he touches in the sea helps to upbear his body, and enable him to breathe and use his eyes; the Fifines in the world help his soul to learn truth.

8. §§ 70-88. How women help in this direction of learning truth, and not men; how other women than the wife are best for that purpose, and most of all women such a one as Fifine, because she professes to play a part, and gives you a chance to study her underneath her part, while the rest of the world profess truth, but really play a part; and how this learning to find truth under falsehood in men and women is the soul's prime aim.

9. §§ 89-126. How the speaker uses the conclusions arrived at, and works out of them the meaning of a day-dream he had that morning after playing Schumann's Carnival. How he saw in his dream the masque of the world, all men and women disguised in their flesh; how his business was to learn their reality under their disguise, the true nature of man and his institutions, religious, scientific, or artistic; how all such institutions must eventually fuse into one belief of all mankind in one God.

10. §§ 127-131. How all the speaker's theories and conclusions crumble to nothing before the face of approaching death.

11. § 132. How his highest strain after the perfect life causes his deepest fall at the end.

II. AN ANALYSIS OF THE POEM.

PROLOGUE.

Lines 1-4. As I swam in the bay this morning, a butterfly came floating above me. 5. The sea was mine, the sky was its own, we were alone there. 6. I cannot join it in the air, and did it touch the sea, it would die. 7-8. Does it feel the better for seeing me swim, as I rejoice in watching it floating in the air, it being a creature that had the choice of earth once instead of air? 9-12. And as the butterfly floats over and sees me in the sea, suppose my love, whose soul left earth early, watches me in this life of thought here, me who, left behind her on earth, live in the world and like its way, though some times warm *weather and waves* (the joy of passionate life and thought) tempt me to

leave earth (the common life of the world), and swim in the sea (live in a life of passion and thought), since I cannot fly in the air (cannot reach heaven during my life on earth). 13-15. We use the sea to swim in, but the spirits of the air need not scorn us altogether—our passion and thought (the sea) upbear us, we have sea for sky, making poems for heaven; and our sea of passion and thought gives us, in the noontide of life at least, such joy as heaven gives the Spirits. 16-19. They are, we seem: they do, we only dream of doing: but for us, in this life, there is always the earth (the common life of the world) as a refuge from the sea (of passion and thought) to gladly swim back to, return to, when one is tired. Does my love look at me, and pity, and wonder?

THE POEM.

(The letter S prefixed to a passage in brackets means that the passage is *sophistical*, dealing with the semblance of truth and not its reality. The letters T & S similarly prefixed mean that the passage contains a mixture of truth and *sophism*. See further explanation in Statement, p. 223.)

At Pornic in Brittany it is Fair-time, and a gentleman living there says to his wife Elvire:

§ 1. Come and let us see the tumbling troupe, and strolling actors. (§ 2) See what transformation the night has effected! The rough scaffolding of last night is bright with colour to-day, and presently the dancers will dance. (§ 3, 4) They came by night, this strolling company, so that the glories of their show, their ape, their monsters and their beauties in tights, might take us duly by surprise this morning. (§ 5) Early in the morning an airy structure between the trees, on the terrace beneath the tower, showed dome-like, surmounted by its red pennon, stretching out to the wind, "frenetic to be free." [S (§ 6) And that very fever of the flag, and the life I know is led by this company of strolling actors, actresses, and dancers, makes my heart leap in sudden sympathy with their lawlessness, though I myself obey Society's calls quite faithfully.] (§ 7) I feel urged to ask, why do these Bohemians, who have cast off allegiance to Society, relish life so much? (§ 8) Certainly, as you see, they still come back to us time and again, for they need a little of our goods, (§ 9) even as a bird can't build a nest without putting into it some bit of human manufacture. (§ 10) But why do birds do that, and why should these Bohemians want anything from us, want to market with us, when all we hold dear they hold cheap? (§ 11) We, for instance, hold our good name dear, but this or that dancer displays her charms to who will pay: if you tell them their monsters, two-headed babies, &c., are impostures, they don't care; you have paid your price and may have your joke. (§ 12) But ask her husband or any of her people to become respectable, and even for

any reward you may offer, they won't do it. (§ 13) Now I want to know plainly what makes their lawlessness law to them, their poverty, wealth, their vice virtue, their disease health? (14) You shake your head, and look pale and sad; why are you troubled? (§ 15) Let us call Fifine, the beauty of the show, she will make my thoughts plainer to you and me. [S (§ 16) She is to me a sexless and bloodless sprite, with loveliness for law and self-sustainment for morality, and yet I own that her charm arrests me, as the lawlessness of her companions has done. (§ 17) Do you account it a fault in the gold-coloured lily of the East, that just as its golden glow takes the place of the snow-white of our lily, its drugged scent takes the place of the chaste perfume of our lily, and instead of nourishing insects as our lily does with its perfume, kills the insects who, hoping to feed on it, are poisoned by its scent and feed it. (§ 18) No more can you blame Fifine, call it a fault in her, knowing her to have qualities analogous to the lily, that she uses her charms (as the lily uses its scent) to wheedle men's money from them (as the lily takes the life of the insects to feed on). Still, lily or Fifine, a wise man looks and praises, does not taste: admires, not loves. It is the wife we love.] (§ 19) But, you ask, "How does Fifine make these thoughts plain?" In answer to that, let me ask you to imagine such a procession of beauties as Louis XI., when near his death, loved to see. A procession of famous women, lawless or not. (§ 20) Helen comes first: Helen who made men acquiesce in the ravage of the war she caused, and bless, not curse her beauty; next comes Cleopatra, whose beauty was dominated by her soul, but who made victims of her lovers, from sheer lust of conquest; then the Saint on Pornic church who at midnight, peasants say, often leaves her pedestal to save shipwrecked sailors, and for years has endured wind, rain, and snow, and may seem to wonder at Cleopatra in her sublime nudity, whether she ever prays or not, and yet thinks, charitably, I suppose she stripped herself to feed the poor. [T & S (§ 21) Fifine must take a place in the masque, and shall speak for herself presently. (§ 22) What does the masque mean, you ask? (§ 23) Suppose you, Elvire, separate from yourself and join in the procession; then you will judge yourself apart, as you do the other women, and so I may answer your question by showing how you beat the whole procession, including Fifine. (§ 24) But let us study her first.—See, I put a whole franc in her outstretched tambourine.] See how glad she is that we pity her necessity to show herself, pose, and dance, for hire. She, born perchance as pure as you; she, from whose contact you nevertheless draw back your skirts; she braves your scorn, because, after all, she is doing her business *in life, solely to earn money to keep her old parents, and preserve her*

sister's purity. (§ 25) Nay, she earns money even for her brute of a husband. [T & S (§ 26) Well, the phantom procession of women, ending with Fifine and yourself, Elvire, stands there to be judged by you and me without favor. (§ 27) But, you ask, why do I want to make yourself judge you? Perhaps I do so because of a myth I mused over years ago, how Helen really never left Greece, never saw Troy, but the Helen who went with Paris to Troy was only a phantom of the real Helen, made by Jove and set by him among mortals for sport, to experiment on men, and see who would yield to, or scorn, the beauties of a mere phantom: whilst, all the while, the real Helen sat at home, and could estimate what her phantom was worth. For some such fancy, I make you judge yourself, standing apart among the other women, phantom-like as they. (§ 28) I have shown you all these women, I see the good there is in each of their beauties; and now you are glad that, notwithstanding, or because of my so seeing, I hold you the best. You understand, then, that the fleshly beauty does not unduly attract me, but that I look at bodies in order only to learn minds; that it has been the inward grace, not the outward beauty, which allured me, and that the coarsest earth covering may be transpierced by a spark from heaven. All this has come of demonstrating the value of Fifine. (§ 29) And indeed, even her virtues, such as they are, illustrate the world somehow and have their triumph.] Because it is my belief that every creature has once in its existence the supreme moment when God's sun shines on it, and lets its truth be seen and valued, as any one grain of sand may for once take the sun's light on its most prominent facette. (§ 30) Fifine is no adamant shield like Helen,—Asian mirror like Cleopatra,—Oriental pane like the Pornic Saint. Still, may she not be like a bit of glass on a dunghill? For, the moment the sun strikes it the piece of glass shines as bright as your diamond. (§ 31) Let her be defiled as much as you choose to imagine, she does not seek to hide her defilement; she even calls attention to it to rouse your pity. You say, a girl of my breeding would have died under the treatment she has had; she must be made of other flesh and blood from mine, with a power in her to live through degradation, a power that can only be possessed by the naturally vile. Surely she was not wronged too much; she would not have felt as we should feel. [S (§ 32) Be it so; but can you wonder that the one appeal, the only claim she makes, should find my heart sympathetic? Her absolute truthfulness about herself is what gains her my goodwill. For her silent pose and prayer, as she held out her tambourine, said plainly, "I am true to myself and my fellows; I don't pretend to give anything but the sight of me to a Philistine; nor do I claim the charm, virtues, or idiosyncrasy of your love, your wife, Helen, Cleopatra, the Pornic

Saint, or Elvire.] [T & S (§ 33) I do not say, like Elvire, 'Why do you not love me now as once?' The soul's treasures remain, nay, multiply; though the morning of love is dead, the noon of love has matured and strengthened it against chance and change; but the root it so struck is struck in vain if the fruit tenderness bears is only praised, not tasted by you. Why is it not tasted? Because that fruit is yours now (though once it was not, and then you were eager for it); now, you have it safe. You can afford to escape my tenderness, if too eager a manifestation of it bores or alarms you; any shining light rather than the sun, which is yours you say." (§ 34) Now these words of yours, that I put into Fifine's mouth, are just what any woman would say to her husband; and all women mistake men in this way; if women could but understand mental analysis, much domestic torture, self-applied by the wife, would be spared to her and her husband.] [S As I said before, bodies show me minds; to me the outward sign shows the inward grace. By demonstrating the value of Fifine, I prove that your worth surpasses not only hers, but that of all other women, for me. (§ 35) You and your love I prize, as I do that rare picture of Raphael's, gained by great expense of time, trouble, tact, and money, from an Italian Prince who first wouldn't sell because his father had made him promise rather to boast, "I have a Raphael" than "I am a Prince;" who then was nearly persuaded to sell it to an American, because at least, as his heart must go with the picture, it would go to a free land. At last I managed to cut out the American and buy it. While the matter was in doubt, I was in a fever of fears and hopes as I was while I was wooing you, and before you had given me your word; now I pass it by, scarcely giving it a glance; nay, turn my back on it perhaps, to loll at ease and look at Doré's last picture-book. (§ 36) Suppose the Raphael were to reproach me with my fickleness, as you Elvire do with regard to Fifine, I should say, 'Of course I hoped and feared while ultimate possession was uncertain; but once my possession is sure, there is no further need for that hope or fear. Not that I expect to hold you free from new hopes and fears of another sort,—far from it. But you are mine; I know you are there: and naturally I look at and enjoy any scrap, sketch, or caricature meant to give momentary and passing pleasure. Suppose though, there was an alarm of fire; even though I were elbow-deep in Doré, I'd sacrifice every portfolio and brave the worst of the flames to save my Raphael or die with it.' [You, Elvire, are to me as the Raphael; Fifine as the sketch or caricature.] (§ 37) Ah! you are pleased now.] (§ 38) But play out your part in the phantom pageant of women. Let me show you your own beauty, so *I see it predominating over the rest.*

How ravishingly pure you stand in pale constraint !
 My new created shape, without or touch or taint,—
 Inviolate of life and worldliness and sin—
 Fettered, I hold my flower, her own cup's weight would win
 From off the tall slight stalk atop of which she turns
 And trembles, makes appeal to one who roughly earns
 Her thanks instead of blame (did lily only know),
 By thus constraining length of lily, letting snow
 Of cup-crown, that's her face, look from its guardian stake
 Superb on all that crawls beneath, and mutely make
 Defiance, with the mouth's white movement of disdain,
 To all that stoops, retires, and hovers round again !
 How windingly the limbs delay to lead up, reach
 Where, crowned, the head waits calm : as if reluctant, each
 That eye should traverse quick such lengths of loveliness,
 From feet, which just are found imbedded in the dress,
 Deep swathed about with folds and flowings virginal,
 Up to the pleated breasts, rebellious 'neath their pall,
 As if the vesture's snow were moulding sleep not death,
 Must melt and must release, whereat, from the fine sheath,
 The flower-cup-crown starts free, the face is unconcealed,
 And what shall now divert, once the sweet face revealed.
 From all I loved so long, so lingeringly left ?

(§ 39)

Because indeed your face fits just into the cleft
 O' the heart of me, Elvire, makes right and whole once more
 All that was half itself without you ! As before,
 My truant in its place ! Because e'en seashells yearn,
 Plundered by any chance : would have their pearl return,
 Let negligently slip away into the wave !
 Never may they desist, those eyes so grey and grave,
 From their slow sure supply of the effluent Soul within !
 And, would you humour me ? I dare to ask, unpin
 The web of that brown hair ! O'erwash o' the sudden, but
 As promptly, too, disclose, on either side, the jut
 Of alabaster brow ! So part those rillels, dyed
 Deep by the woodland leaf, when down they pour, each side
 O' the rock top, pushed by Spring !

[T & S (§ 40) And where, you ask, is all this beauty and wonder I so trippingly describe ? (§ 41) Where indeed, but in my soul and sense, in my capacity as judge of Art ? (§ 42) *Why* I know it, I cannot tell, any more than I can analyse the moving power of picture or symphony.] (§ 43) And yet I may in some sort give you an answer : Your question really leads to the wider question : Why do people choose each other as man and wife ? I suppose they do so something in this way. Each soul I hold to be complete and best of its kind, and no two are similar ; each one has bodily or other hindrances to its true expression. (§ 44) Each soul, therefore, tries to find its complement—what shall help it to full expression—in another soul. Plato's theory of course ; corroborated by the fact that art, which is

the love of loving,—the rage to know, see, and feel absolute truth for its own sake alone,—art, I say, once seeing and fixing on a part, instinctively searches for and finds the whole. (§ 45) Let me illustrate this by drawing three profiles: (§ 46, 47) one representing horror; (§ 48) one laughing or smiling joy; (§ 49) one your own portrait, Elvira. (§ 50) If even I, with so feeble power of execution, can, though but imperfectly, so express the three different kinds of emotion required in these three profiles, that you, the critic, can see with your soul's eye the whole idea I meant to show: how much more shall the *proficient* soul (as distinguished from my unpractised skill in drawing) be able, exercised on *nature* (as distinguished from art), to find out and set free from its bodily and other hindrances the true character of another soul, of which only an imperfect image meets the eye at first sight? (§ 51) Let each soul, then, amend its love, set free from trammels of ugliness or blunder its comrade soul, as I corrected the ugliness and blunders in my three profiles, and all couples will understand each other. Let them have the result of their mutual soul's work, [T & S and give me my Elvire, for me more beautiful than beauty completely visible to the eye of sense: for to me, from having been like the perfect Raphael picture, you become as is my unfinished marble statue by Michel Agnolo. (§ 52) That statue is to me as a diamond to a pearl, in comparison to the Raphael.]

In that rough marble hewn by Michel Agnolo himself, looking at it with my soul, I found the idea but roughly hinted in the unfinished statue; for me it meant Eidotheè. My fleshly eye, unaided by my soul, would see little but a shapeless mass. But to my soul's eye she is plainly seen, moving toward me ravishingly, living as a triumph of the master. If I try to see with my fleshly eye what is in that marble block, though it bears plain evidence on it of the master's own hand, I see no more than the fool saw, who, happening to pass when I bargained for and bought it for 10 dollars, said, "It's worth 5 pauls to make lime of." [T & S (§ 53) Will you, who seen by my soul, put all other beauty to shame for me (as my soul's idea of Eidotheè puts to shame the beauty of so many finished statues), look scornfully at yourself, as that fool looked at the marble block, and ask, "Where is the beauty in me?" No; see yourself as in my soul I see you!]

You know now, that as I could discern by my soul's eye the inner beauty of the master's conception, piercing through the hindrances of the rough-hewn marble, so by my soul's eye I see you as you are, were, and will be, really, through the veil of flesh now dimmed by years.]

(§ 54) And as each soul can thus find the beauty and completeness in another soul, so each soul gathers, from the outer world, materials to *make its own world*; whether such gathered materials form an aura, or

atmosphere (like our earth's) in which the soul floats and moves (as the earth in its atmosphere), or whether these gathered materials not so much surround as become incorporated with the soul, and so add their worth to the soul's, nourishing it as wine enriches blood, and giving it vigour to conquer through an eternity of battle. (§ 55) And this acquiring from the outer world and adding to its own, and thus making its life richer, must surely be the purpose for which the soul lives and strives, so that the fruit of such acquisition and conquest remains its own for ever, so stored and guaranteed that the actual gain of the soul can be made known at the death of the body. This process, that is, goes on through all the soul's life in the body, and only at the body's death does the amount thus conquered or acquired appear clearly. Nay, I assert that all real worth exists only in the soul that can see, and use what it sees. There is no real worth in the outer world; that world's worth exists only in the soul's power to see and use it: save for the soul's seeing and using and touching it, that world would remain inert matter. Or again, the outer world is mere material to be transmuted, of no use or effect unless the soul of man, breathing on it, calls out of it elemental flame, that is, fire that lights and warms the soul, and is beauty, life-giving power, for that soul. If, on the soul's so breathing on or touching that mere material of the world, each particle yields such elemental flame, it is no matter whether the particles so breathed on or touched be gum and spice (*i. e.* apparently precious), or straw and rottenness (*i. e.* apparently valueless). (Fifine is the latter—Elvire the former.) The outer world then, the soul touches, whether good or bad, if it yields to her touch flame, warmth, light, gives her life: and what so responds to her touch, she finds to be beauty. But supposing it does not so respond to her touch? Then it becomes repugnant to her, ugly, death-giving: she cannot live with it or near it, and she recoils, for what is repugnant to her is as fatal as death: but, recoiling, and thus put to her own resources, and finding, for the moment, no life-giving, only death-giving, material, she finds in herself the power to create for the nonce a new beauty, giving her life: and that ugliness becomes, thereupon, not merely harmless, but the soul makes it serve its purpose as a contrast or foil to the new beauty she has thus found force to create. [Take a simple illustration,—Suppose a soul of a loving nature, and incapable of hating, cast among people who do nothing but hate each other; Hate is so repugnant to that soul that without loving, it must die; that is, it cannot feed on hate, it can only feed on love. How can it contrive to live without food? By imagining what love might be, with another loving soul, or taking some animal or flower to bestow its love on.]

(§ 56) I gather heart and hope, through or because of these conquests of the soul: (1) her calling out (from roughness, ungainliness, incompleteness) beauty and truth of purpose; (2) her power to transfer all actual achievement in the visible world to a resting-place in her imagination, secure from being construed wrongly there: (3) her ardour to help where completion is near, but not quite reached: (4) and last, not least, through or because of her conquest, even with stark deformity, fighting with which by using her creative power as shown above, she wrings from it symmetry. By analogy, I praise a sculptor's pupil, who, when his master's crude but mighty thought, only roughly-hewn out in marble, is called by fools abortive, puts himself and his finished statue in clay by the side of that rough-hewn marble, saying, I am his, he made me, and my ideas: by the fact of this my finished work, I and my work vindicate him. (§ 57) So I worked out the idea I found in the rough Michel Agnolo block, by making a finished statue in clay from it, which statue, once made and placed by the side of the master's unfinished marble (so as to rivet my conception of the meaning), I destroyed at once. If I made the conception plain to my outward eye, the master was to thank for it: but may he not have smiled for joy, that one man at least was left to recognize the perfection hid in the unfinished work, and able to work out the idea therein, by making a finished statue palpable and visible? (§ 58) Now as my gain in learning, and keeping in my soul the statue Eidotheë is my own for ever, so such gains as I have described the soul achieving, from the material of the outer world, are surely its own for ever, not to be given to those who, working with the same material, could not find and see the beauty hid beneath roughness. (§ 59) But how intense will love grow when hereafter love means the desire in each soul to share with another soul (who has worked in a like but new and changed manner) the treasures each has so gained. The material of the world your soul touches (see § 55) may yield to the touch of your soul roseflame, to the touch of mine, red, blue, green or yellow: need we doubt a time will come, when we each learn the secret of the other's soul's touch,—I, how you developed the power of self-sacrifice from materials which only gave me food for self-indulgence: you, how I developed force from material which gave you pity? What joy will it be when a further step is taken, and instead of desiring to share, each soul achieves the power to share, one with the other, its gains, so that blended, their gains may make a complete unity, as the fused prism colours make white. When in short all souls can so interchange and learn each the other's secret of gaining from the outer world. I say that the foregoing *exemplifies a law even now apparent in the eternal progress, viz. Love's*

law, which I formulate thus: Each soul works, lives, and longs for itself, by itself, *because* of the existence of a soul other than itself, attracting it as towards a lodestar, and, whether an idea, a man or a woman, whether god, man, or both mixed, this other soul, so attracting, is guessed at through the veil of flesh, by parts, seen darkly, which prove a whole, to be one day seen clearly. My soul so found you, Elvire.

(§ 60) But you say, "With all this boast about the soul and its empire over the world, you accept the rule of sense when Fifine appears. You talk of soul; you say that, in search of souls, you may, indeed you must, examine and prove the worth of all women; and that your report of such examination will be, that no face or form is so vile but a certain worth is evolved therefrom. Have you not then to get through some flesh besides? Of course, like the bee which tries all flowers, you only choose the honied ones, but you must taste all. 'Is this fair?' you say,—Are you deceiving yourself, me, or God?"

[T & S (§ 61) I will explain. You have asked a question that demands a wide answer. I could answer you by music: for while words struggle feebly with the weight of the false (the thick element between our soul and truth) music can electrically *win a passage* through the lid of our earthly sepulchre (our body), which our words can only *push against*. Music *eludes* the mass, words try to *heave away*. But music, dumb for you, withdraws her help from me: and I must answer you in words, but my answer will spread over a wide space. Need you care, if my answer exceeds bounds, and embraces other questions arising from yours? Let my thought range wide then.

(§ 62) For this is the moment of sunset, this the place, and this the mood, in you and me, when all things we see, hear, and perceive, soothe us by their harmony (as the musician's ear is soothed by the harmony of the common chord). And as, listening to the common chord, one hears the same chord repeated in an ascending scale, till the complete compass of the instrument struck is heard in fancy, so from the harmony struck out of the scene around us just now, for you and me, we can construct and complete the entire scale, compass, or scheme of life. How can you fail to find, or rather lose your question, in the ample and universal reply that nature gives you in the scene around us? Here, outside the village, at sunset, we can only *see* the spire of the church, but from it I *divine* the church, the graveyard, and all its graves, and four-footed and feathered tenants. [That is, you see, just as, from what my bodily eye can just now discern of the scene around, I can divine what the darkness hides, so the soul works as I have described, and divines the whole from a part. By the same process, I know from

Fifine's outside all her soul.] (§ 63) And here, as we go down the steep descent, we have to pick our steps and use our eyes: here, we have reached the beach and the bay, and opposite the Isle Noirmoutier. The waters of the bay run (where they are touched by the night wind) towards it. But, within the cliffs of the bay, the blue water remains quiet: let us keep our calm also, and take our fill of sights and sounds: the hum of insects, the scuttle of rabbits, and the flight of the owl. Each insect, rabbit, and bird, is intent on its business, and on doing that best. So I take the lesson of this evening and its sights and sounds: learn to divine the whole from the part, as I divined the church, the graveyard, and its furred and feathered tenants from the church-spire: learn to live my life truly, and the best I can, as the animals live theirs: learn, I to know you, you to know me, as I know your thoughts at this moment (though you don't speak) from your beating heart, see your eyes (though they are downcast) because their lashes touch my cheek: learn to keep our calm in our life on this earth, as the water is calm in its life between the cliffs: learn from the harmony of all this scene around us, and from all animal nature doing its best, to obey that impulse in our own nature, which prompts us to try again for success, even where we failed before, in the effort to understand each other, and life. The sum of all the lesson thus inculcated, the way to learn it, is—that we should try to rise into the true out of the false.] (§ 64) You ask what I mean by that phrase, "rise into the true out of the false"? Here is an example: This morning, as I bathed in the sea, I let my body drop perpendicularly, and hung erect in the water. When a swimmer does this, if he keeps quite still, holds his head well back, and raises his chin, he is sure of keeping his nostrils above water, and so he can breathe. But if he tries to rise and look round him, he sinks under, and cannot breathe. The swimmer has only learned this fact by many times trying to rise, and so each time sinking into the water, and getting it into his mouth and eyes. Once he has learned his lesson, through bitter experience of the taste and smart of sea water, he knows, once for all, that he can only breathe and feel the outer air, by obeying the laws of the water's nature. (§ 65) Just so, my soul is apt to try and escape from the falseness of the world and my flesh, which falseness, and my flesh, upbear my soul in this life here, though my soul beats against, tries to escape from them, as too gross to live in. Still, they do upbear her, they are the medium that sustains her, though she cannot live wholly in them without breathing truth: and if she tries to escape from them, they leave supporting her (as the sea water yields to the swimmer trying to rise too high in the water) and she plunges deeper into falsehood in the *too sudden effort* after truth. Still, each spring upward, thus made,

causing her, as it does, to sink deeper in the brine of the false, makes her more and more dislike the taste of the false. As, however, she is so upborne by the false, its necessity must be patiently endured, and she must not spring too suddenly upward, but let hands and body use the false (as the swimmer's hands and body use the sea water, and whatever in it will help him) while she, the soul, reaches and breathes truth, the air. [S (§ 66) Now I pretend to know how to keep my body balanced in the false: that is, how to let my body and its functions have full play in the world as it exists, and yet let my soul breathe the truth. And the more I gain skill in the direction of knowing and conquering the false, the more easily I submit for the time to it, because the greater my skill, the easier my escape from the world, if I wish to escape. Though I know my soul's ultimate business is not with this world (the sea), but with the air (the truth), and that the falseness of the world eludes me as the sea water eludes the swimmer, even while it sustains him, still each time I try to grasp the false, my soul rises higher, even as the swimmer's head rises higher when he makes the least motion of his hand towards grasping the sea water, or what is in it. (§ 67) So, when we are deepest plunged (through too hasty eagerness to rise) back into the world's falseness, if we grasp at something seeming like reality, which may be another soul, we are helped to rise thereby. It is washed away from us by the wave of life, but touching or grasping at it has helped us, and we continue to aspire towards the true, the pure air.]

Even though a man so sent, tossed upward, be lashed with the spray of the world, he still ascends, and gains knowledge of the mightier forces above humankind,—God or demon,—each and all inviting the aspiring soul to approach, and thus urged upward, find at those heights the good in evil, the right in wrong, the clearing of obscurity. To howl at the spray is childish. And (to bring in another simile) the howl any man raises at being lashed by the world, if it rouse the whole pack of dogs and puppies howling in concert with him, merely brings Huntsman Common sense to the rescue, who silences the pack with his thong. (That is, each man's common sense shows him it is futile, nay, mischievous, to howl.) And to return to the old image, common sense teaches that while ocean is blue and rolling, and so beautiful (that is, the world is worth enjoying), it can be dried up, consumed (the world can be made nought), by the fire of the soul. [S (§ 68) I then, living in the world, but not of it, seek the sky, prefer its denizens, not the seas, and never dive so deep but I can get a glimpse at the air above. I seize you my wife by catching at Fifine, the melted beryl, the "tawny wavelet." Did not you and I come out just to see her and her troop?—and was it not the sight of her, and our talk about her, that led us to

change our ground of thought? Has she not given us this chance of thinking out problems of life: and been to me that other soul which helped me to rise from the sea into the air? Let us then not sneer at her, but admit her use in the world (already proved, but now more proved still).]

(§ 69, 70) But you object again, why will I only accept a woman's help, not a man's? (§ 71) Because one woman for that purpose is worth all the men. Say you can rule men: you do so only so long as they find it worth their while to follow you. Each man is content that you should play sun and he satellite, so he can steal your light, heat, and virtue, and while following in your course, turn all the while on his own axis (be self-centred). And then, only complete men are fit even to follow so, as satellites; whereas any sort of woman, complete or not, will rush into and absorb herself in the man she chooses to make more complete by so doing. Women, in short, grow into the man. Men depend on him only, at best. And what kind of dependence is it? Say you have even, by your influence, made a man all he is outwardly worth—what of yourself do you find, in his true inner self, at the end? (§ 72) A bubble-fish floats, swelled out by the sea, giving out lovely hues: the real creature is a mere rudiment, head, body, and stomach in one: drain it of water, the beauty and nine-tenths of the bulk are gone: the tenth remaining is the creature's real self, no more akin to the sea than the sea is to yonder setting sun.

(§ 73) But look at the rill, yonder, that empties itself and its joy into the sea: imagine you can disengage it from the sea, and ask for the result, the beauty of its course from inland; all that result and beauty are given to the sea, to make the sea by a few drops the bigger. (§ 74) Well, the bubble-fish that takes all, and gives nothing to the sea, is man: the rill that gives all, and takes nothing from the sea, is woman, from Fifine to Elvire. (§ 75) To rule men, you must first stoop to their level, hide your true meaning by vulgarizing your words, and so teach by accident perhaps. Just as an Indian entices stags in winter to an enclosure where they may have hay, when grass is frozen, by putting on the hide and horns of a stag, and looking like one: so to benefit men, give them good in lieu of worthless mental food, you must make yourself like them; for, if you show you are better, higher-natured than they, they leave you. (§ 76—78) You rule women, not by the *stratagem* of concealing your best self, but by the *strategy* of showing them your best self. The Indian leads the stags by pretending to be a stag: the man rules men by pretending he is like them. Arion charmed the dolphins by singing his noblest song; man rules women *by showing himself at his noblest in their sight*.

(§ 79) It is no use trying to prove what fruit a man will yield by enriching his mental nature, as a tree's soil is enriched by manure: try quite another plan, and if you want to get his true product, find out his power of action, set him to hate somebody or something. Don't cherish his root, but lop off his over-luxuriant mental growths; and you will find that as the goat gained favour from Bacchus by cropping the vine's shoots and flowers, because a vine so treated concentrates its juices into the grape, and wine is the result, so a man thwarted in his purposeless or foolish impulses, will concentrate his energies in the direction of hate. Take the puniest man-animalcule, starved body, stunted mind, and you will see with wonder that neither heaven nor earth can soothe his spite, or make him content, or by any effort make him propagate love, or produce one virile thought, word, or deed. For nature, while she lets her failures live out their life, will not give them power to propagate their kind. But let such a starveling man be touched with hate of some real man, whose existence thwarts his; and, as a piece of chalk cliff is surprised into effervescence, if by chance acid comes in contact with it, so the creature so touched with hate, "blows out to thrice his bulk, and cuckoospits some rose;" that is, the touch of hate makes such a spiteful man do his best to poison the life of a real true man, as the aphid, according to *his* nature, tries to kill the rose by surrounding it with the poisonous foam called cuckoospit. (§ 80) Women give you all, and make you believe yourself worth something. From Elvire to Fifine, they convince me, at least, that I am a truth though all else be seeming: that, if I dream, at least I know I dream. Besides the seeming, the falseness, is transitory, fleeting. I can stand still, and let truth come to me. [S The woman's touch—yours—steadies me, assists me to remain self-centred, fixed, while all around me moves away, disappears. You, the woman, by believing in me, at once make me believe that since one soul has disengaged my soul from the shows of things, my soul is a fact, and make me hope that my work will be repaid. I expect to learn where, when, and how I shall see truth return, because even the lowest of women, Fifine, knows me. How much more if my wife does! (§ 81) But, say you, why is not one woman, the wife, enough? Let me answer by an illustration. When last night we two saw a boatman steering, rowing and punting his boat, along and round by shoal and sand-bank, instead of waiting till the tide turned and a ship could take his cargo straight across, I commented approvingly on his courage in using his skill and craft in steering. On the same principle, I suppose, I take Fifine for the moment as guide, on such occasions as do not make it worth while to use my wife's help, the ship's resources. Well, take this illustration and apply it.

(§ 82, 83)¹ Our life is ours, on condition of proving ourselves true. I wish, indeed, one voyage were enough, and that we needed only the steady ship *Elvire*, the wife, and not the little boat *Fifine* too, to test our skill in seamanship (our power to know and use the world). But you see, *Fifine*, the boat, does require mental exercise, and therefore, increase of skill in steering, which skill is not called into exercise by the wife, the ship. What danger do I run with the wife, the ship, on the sea of life? None. But with *Fifine*, I am forced to use tact, courage, and nerve, and thereby increase my readiness of resource, clearness of judgment, and knowledge of life. I want, in short, to learn *Fifine* in order to make myself more worthy of my wife's love. So if I chance to see, talk with, learn, and finally dominate *Fifine*, it is that I may come back to you a better and more knowing man, and above all, come back having proved my truth and love to you.] [T & S (§ 84) See, it is nearly night, and the landscape becomes dim, sea-like, mysterious : does it not seem too as if the sea retired even, and became small, as if it retired to enable some other force to play its part? You see the night again tells us, by this change in the show of earth and sea, that all is false, fleeting : and yet still we strain after permanence, and the truth that at least ourselves are true. (85) And now, to conclude and gather up this series of ideas, all leading from one to another, and begun by the sight of *Fifine* at the Fair. Is it not our recoil from falsehood, fleetingness, which makes us feel the charm of *Fifine* and her tribe? For she and hers profess falseness, acting, while the rest of the world profess truth, yet lie. You approve an actor in proportion as he imposes on you : the falsier to himself and liker to his part he is, the more he wins your praise, the greater his success, and the more vivid the truth his part was meant to teach. (§ 86) On the same principle, in life, each of us has a false outside, our flesh, as the actor has his part ; what each of us has to find out is the truth of each other man's or woman's nature, separated from the falseness of their acted part, their flesh. This truth however is discovered only by the exceptionally gifted eye, now and then at a happy moment. Our life in fact means, learning to abhor falsehood and love truth, but to discern under all falsehood (what is acting in the actor) and snatch from it the

¹ End of § 82, "See Horace to the boat, &c." That is, Compare Horace's Ode addressed to Vergil (on the latter's embarking for Athens) and to the vessel Vergil sailed in. The Ode is the 3rd of the 1st book of Horace's Odes (Sir Theodore Martin's translation, or Conington's). The lines at end of § 82 (p. 103 of the Poem) beginning "And try if trusting"—ending "should not touch—the deep," contain a paraphrase of part of the Ode. The allusions on p. 104 of the Poem continue the idea of Vergil's voyage to Athens : the speaker compares himself to Vergil, *Fifine* to the boat that takes him to Athens and back.

truth and beauty that lie beneath. And when these *snatched waifs* of truth are gathered and displayed, and we find them match with *strays* of truth that we have not *snatched*, but which are yet in the world, when I say waifs and strays are gathered alike at the end of life, and the beautiful has been extracted from beneath the foul, and shines forth, and truth, first seen only as a point, flashes forth everywhere on the circle of life, manifest to the soul, though hid from sense, and at last unobstructed by sense,—then is the end of life achieved. But we must wait (for this achievement) our appointed threescore years and ten.] [S (§ 87) So I come back to where we started from; the impulse to sympathize with the lawlessness of these strolling actors, to see what it meant, and to learn some such lessons of life as I have tried to express. And if some of these lessons of life were abstruse, it was a dream that impelled me to teach them. (88) For I am but a dreamer and no poet; poets are not troubled with such fancies as mine, such as seek other vent than poetry, and often exceed reasonable bounds.]

(§ 89) I sat dreaming in the house this morning, with the windows wide, and sights and sounds pleasant enough were given to me; but fancies too came thronging in, which by no means could be reduced to visible or articulate shape by any skill of mine. (§ 90) So as my fancies began to overtask my feeling, and its power of expression finds best help in music, I bethought me of music to express and fix these my fancies. (§ 91) I played Schumann's Carnival, choosing it, you see, as harmonizing with the mood wrought on me by the fair here, and its strolling company. I knew that in that company was some one, reserved by fate, to give me the electric spark of sympathy, which proves that, do but each of us link hands, we can find in the dark of the world the fire of Truth, until the whole human race, high and low, is united in one chain: the fair expands to the Carnival, the Carnival to the world.

(§ 92) As I played, and remarked how each musical theme in the piece was, so to say, new dressed, I saw thence how truth is served to us in successive generations as at a banquet, the viand the same, the seasoning changed according to the era at which the truth is being discussed as food. For the essential food, the facts of life, truth, in short, never vary; their expression (seasoning of the meat), whether in art or life, is always changing, and though such newness, change of expression, is repugnant at first (as is a new sauce to the palate), it soon becomes a necessity to the souls of men (as does the new sauce to the gradually accustomed palate). Most of all is this apparent in music as a form of expressing truth. For in music change of method is its law, and what is precious or rare in music is, not the Absolute, fundamental good, but freshness of presentation of that absolute or good—surprise in

short. (§ 93) After playing the piece I dozed (§ 94), and seemed to see the Carnival at Venice.

(§ 95) I looked on it as from the height of a pinnacle. I saw an immense concourse of men and women, all masked. The masks were of all sorts—beasts, birds, fishes, old men, and young; (§ 96) nay, masks such as showed what the man had become through some one passion, love, or hate. (§ 97) And I asked, why must some such one love or hate task each soul, and draw it its own way, and shape it so? This thought made me observe closer. I discovered that the crowd was dumb; no sound arose from them. (§ 98) But as in dreams one always knows the why and wherefore of everything, I seemed in my dream to know the reason of the crowd's silence. They did speak, but in my dream I knew that I was not to know their speech, but to learn by sight of their masks, not by hearing their speech, what they really were. A blind man (said I) must get truth by hearing; I, seeing, can know, and so dispense with speech. Then let me come closer among them. (§ 99) As I descended amidst them, their masks showed less than had at first seemed apparent of divergence from humanity, less of change by reason of slavery to some ruling passion. (§ 100) Still, though I saw them talk, saw their mouths move, saw their eyes strive to look what the voice was saying, their words and my understanding were not *en rapport* with each other. I could not understand their speech; but my observation by sight, not by hearing, helped me to see the truth by what men looked like, not what they said. (§ 101) And I found that each quality thus learned assumed its proper use, and seemed good for something. What at first seemed ugly withered off, and my repugnance to the seeming wrongness or ugliness perished with it. I found myself able to choose what, among the different qualities, to observe, and what to ignore or escape from. Nay, by changing my point of view, I could see how grotesqueness and divergence from beauty assumed another shape, were corrected, added to, subtracted from, and each brute-beast tendency became of use as safeguards to mankind. I found that force and guile are active agents in preservation of life, that peace is only good because strife preceded it, that love is the more precious the more we know of hate, and knowledge the more precious the more we abhor ignorance. (§ 102) I found that I must lessen my scorn of the flesh, the soul's case, for it is distinct from the soul. The soul is, as it were, a drop of dew encased in a crystal globe, *i. e.* the flesh and its attributes—purse-pride, desire to be what one cannot be, lust for praise, and all outwardly-seen qualities—are the crystal round the dewdrop, the case round the soul. (§ 103) And my delight in watching this crowd *was such as a chemist experiences who, unbinding composites, tying*

simples together, and tracing back each effect to a cause, constructs in fancy from the fewest primitives the complex and complete, all the diverse life of beast, bird, reptile, insect, plant, earth, and ore. So I, observing and learning through these various manifestations of men the truth underneath them, separating the composite qualities in each nature into simple ones, tracing the effect (each nature as I saw it in its development) back to the cause (the reason why that nature had become such a development), learned what each man really was from what he appeared to be, and thus gained my object, satisfied my desire of knowing what I myself am, of living my life truly, and knowing why I live it. So I arrived through the fleshly manifestation of falseness, at the true soul beneath, and learned how the naked soul obtained its chequered robe of flesh. (§ 104) I am glad to get all that knowledge and experience, thought I in my dream; but why at Venice rather than elsewhere? (§ 105) And I became aware that a change ensued. (§ 106) And even as while watching a sunset we see the cloud-buildings gradually crumble, fuse, and blend into each other (§ 107), so as I looked in my dream on the amphitheatre which held the Carnival, I saw that while the stir of men continued, a subtle change was going on in one and all of the buildings that formed the amphitheatre, from Mark's Church downwards. Each building became not new, but older,—familiar like houses anywhere one sees any day. (§ 108) I became convinced that what I took for Venice was the world, the Carnival, the masque of mankind, lifelong. I saw the reason of my disgust at the apparent grotesquerie and ugliness, idle hate, and impotent love. It arose from my looking at these manifestations from my lofty station of pride. I saw, too, why that disgust gave way when I descended into the crowd, namely, because wisdom's proper place is the ground, not the sky,—to be among men, not above them; and I saw, that once looked at thus from the proper standpoint, all qualities, good and bad, are nicely adjusted, the one to help or set off the other. (§ 109) And so I learned that we must give up fuming after an impossible ideal, and welcome what we find actually is (§ 110)—*Is*, that is, for the hour; for something in my mind suggested next that not only then, at the moment of my dream, but always and ceaselessly, change was at work on the buildings that seemed so eternal. In my dream, temples of religion towered and sank to make way for other fanes, that seemed to grow up from within the old, and though different from the prime aim of God, whose houses they were, satisfied the generation for whose need they arose. The buildings so changing all around, at any rate serve the purpose of making men look up at, through, or over them, and not down at the pavement. (§ 111) But were they only temples that so rose and fell? Seats of science surely

also rose and fell, nay, were lost twice in a lifetime of three-score years and ten. (§ 112) But though they were always disappearing, and new ones appearing, religion had always her temple. (§ 113) And the one voice which spoke lastingly, said, "Truth, though stationed herself on a rock, builds on sand, and so her work decays, and so she builds afresh. Nothing is permanent, except truth. *She is*, and will have men know she must exist, thrusting herself on them by each such attempt (of building) to live with them." What truth does, is work, lasting or not. In the end there will be truth, absolute,—changing no more in manifestation, no more needing to work. (§ 114) Meantime, her building goes on, one sort of building or another bides its time, and has its use. (§ 115) But, said I in my dream, let us leave watching the change ceaselessly at work on the greater buildings, and look at the fabrics built in between them—fabrics less costly, less rare, but essential to this fair of the world, which they help to keep in bounds, instruct, and regulate. Booths, stalls, and shops, were there (§ 116); History, Morality, Art of all kinds, bade for customers. (§ 117) (But art, with its capricious changes of mood, make the larger changes seem like stability.)

(§ 118) And now again the same voice said, "All is change, but all is really permanence." (§ 119) And as one sees in a sunset the varied shapes of cloud and mountain become simple and definite, from being manifold and multiform,—as the contrasting lives and strifes in the cloud shapes cease their battle quelled by one cloud, and blend in the blank severity of death and peace into a shape befitting the close of day,—heaven's repose over earth's strife—(§ 120) so in my dream the change seemed to be arrested. Each building melted into each; and gradually the whole seemed to blend into a common shape, and become unity in the place of multiformity. And what shape, think you, did they seem to blend into? (§ 121) Here is an apt illustration in Nature,—this Druid monument I have brought you to see. (§ 122) Explore its passages: the further you go the less you will like it, for at the end of them you meet with the dread shape of a cross, to explain whose existence here learning spends labour, only to leave the question obscure. Whence came it? We do not know. (§ 123) Learning will help to answer this question as much as, and no more than, ignorance. The cross raised here before Christianity existed, makes an ignorant man recoil: for what could the symbol mean in those old days? The peasant's tradition is, "People built this building, cross and all, soon after earth was made, to keep them in mind—(1) that earth was made (built) by somebody, did not make itself; (2) that that somebody stays, while we and earth change; (3) that we must therefore make the most of this life, *since we live it in His presence*. As to that great stone pillar lying in

the grass, there were stories about it, which, with the tradition I have named, the Church tried to destroy by saying: 'That stone is no more now than Jacob's stone is on which he dreamed his dream; it was a means,—it is not an end.' But the more the Church preached, the more the peasantry clung to their tradition, thinking that what once a thing had a right to mean, it still must mean. They prefer the rude character of the ancient story, uneffaced by the pen flourishes of the modern scribes, and their comment. As, that is, the tradition about the whole Druidical monument had, as shown above, gained hold of people's minds, so the stories about this stone pillar (a part of the monument) held their ground also, having the same tendency as the tradition, viz. to teach simple obedience to simple laws. Therefore the stories about the pillar held their ground against the Church's words: for there stood the stone, immovable (able to give real doctrine if it pleased), amid the fleeting beauties of spring and summer. So as long as that great stone pillar stood upright, the peasants continued to observe and enjoy the tradition left about it, as being more heartening than the frothier utterances of the Church. At last the Church ordered it to be levelled flat, and even said that it was only the primitive form of the church-spire."

(§ 124) To the shape of this primeval Druid monument it was that, in my dream, I saw all buildings resolved. Grander far was the simple Druid temple in my dream than the temples which lately had looked so solid:—it seemed that after all strife of sects in religion, mankind would return to one simple faith,—the belief in God, and our duty to Him, as formulated in the peasant's tale. And yet, the simplicity of that Druid monument said no more to me, than (as those many-shaped temples and buildings had said), "all is change but permanence too": change, *i. e.* falsehood, and truth, *i. e.* permanence. Each soul works through the shows of sense, which continually change, are false (though they seem the truth), up to its complementary soul: through these fleeting changes it lives, and gradually learning wherein they are false, sees through them the true soul it seeks, which at length it reaches, and finds to be "God, man, or both together mixed." Let only the soul look up, not down; love, not hate; it will see in each change, or falseness, in which truth successively shows itself, the latest presentment of truth: this continually new presentment of truth under successive shapes, tempts the soul upwards, still making it think it has found the actual truth, and keeps on so tempting, until, learning by its successive failures, that for the sake of the soul's development, truth is forced to manifest itself in falsehood, the soul at the happy moment finds skill to discover the truth under its unwrapping falsehood: and to abhor the false, which hid

the true, and as all veils of falsehood fall at last from the truth, change ends: all types become needless,—instead of the singer, we have the song; instead of the historic personage, the impulse of his age which produced him. [T & S (§ 125) What did Æschylus mean when he used that phrase "God, man, or both mixed"? In the opening chorus of Æschylus's 'Prometheus Bound,' Sea Nymphs (creatures more than human, but not goddesses, God 'mortal' or mixture of both) came to console Prometheus. He knew the ultimate, the Truth, and said that the Three formed Fates only knew it besides: had he learned the ultimate, the Truth, through lifting the veil from, *i. e.* learning the nature of such beings as these Nymphs, as I can learn it, through lifting the veil that hides Fifine's soul?] (§ 126) And yet all this has been a dream, even commonplace by everyday light. What seemed awhile fresh and strange becomes tame and trite, and the higher our pride has lifted us in our dream, the further we have to descend to earth and fact. Have we not seen that even this Druid monument told its story long ago to waking folk, and never promised to help us dreamers? How then should the buildings of my dream help me when I come to real fact? (§ 127) Let us, my wife, go home together peaceably, complete our circuit of a league, and end where we began. Even so with life, wherever we were nursed to life, death is our last mother,—we find the last truth first, and final too. (§ 128) But, you say, "Why is that truth final now, more than before, when it was a truth proved false?" Because here a new point arises: hitherto in my dream of the soul's progress, all falsehoods discovered were so many triumphs to man's nature, and implied no submission to another nature quite as real as his which chose to have its way with man (namely, nature which demands death of the body). But now, facing the fact of death, man's pride is quelled by necessary acquiescence with the law of death. Learning the truth of death does not, as the learning of other truth, through successive shapes and grades of its presentment, promote man's soul a stage: to learn the truth of death is to learn defeat, because on the body's death the soul can no longer in this life, in this world, exercise its power. Therefore there is no triumph for the soul now as there was in its progress through its earthly life, in learning the truths of that life. Sense, or the body, can register *its* triumphs, because whatever the body needs in the way of development always comes to it soon or late. When need was to walk or run, legs and feet were developed: when need was to take up and hold things, hands and fingers were developed, and so on through the history of evolution. In short, the body, or sense, gets what it wants by gradual development of the *right organs* to carry out its wants. Such promotion of the body

from point to point, analogous to the growth of the soul by learning the truths of life, is a cause for pride in man : if the soul's prompting to rule and be ultimate master here from first to last, could develop it as the body's prompting to grow because of its needs develops the body, the soul too might be proud. But since the approach of the body's death is the ultimate truth learned by the soul here, there is no cause for pride, for this truth merely warns the soul its right of rule will go, and that another soul, succeeding it, must be master in future. Mere wanting to believe will not of itself develop the soul's power of learning truth, as mere wanting a limb will make the body develop that limb. (§ 129) And to conclude, as life ends where it began, so does love, in the soul which runs its round (that is, develops itself for its complementary soul, until they are mutually complete). Such a soul has constancy, faith, ripeness. [T & S Though a man range through women as I have supposed myself to do, and find all the truth that is in them, I so much the more readily come back to Elvire, my wife : the other women represented the change I saw in my dream,—my wife means permanence. Love, as I said, ends where love began. And, as the natural man feels lordlier free than bound, such ending looks like law. There is small chance for pride here, and so far from realizing that one has gained anything, each step aside to search after the nature of other women, proves to be mere vain wandering. I, the wanderer, bring home no profit from my quest, but the feeling that I had best keep house altogether, could I begin my life again. Had I stated my problem right, it would have been—From a given point (that is Elvire, your wife's nature, and your home life with her) evolve the infinite (that is all nature, men, women, and organic life), not, as I did state it, go out from your wife and home, and find what composes the infinite (all nature, men, women, and organic life), and piece them together into one Elvire. Fifine is the foam-flake, as I have shown, Elvire is the sea, which contains many such foam-flakes, and yet you and I left her, our home, and ourselves to catch at the one foam-flake, and got blistered by it for our pains perhaps (because she raised discussion between us for a moment). We are wise now, and want no more of the fickle sea-foam : enough of it and of the roar of the sea (enough, that is, of learning people's natures, and going out into the world to learn it) : we will live and die henceforth quietly landlocked : here is our house-door. (That is, I come back from my experiences of men and women in the world, to my true life, with the love of my soul.) (§ 130) How pale you look in the night ! Real flesh and blood should not look so pale, even under the night. Touch me to show you are alive, and do not vanish from your repentant husband ! Give me your hand. (That is at a life's end, the night of

life,—even his inmost beliefs are apt to become at moments shadowy and unreal to a man.) (§ 131) Now that we agree at last, let me cast our double horoscope. Let me discard that simile of the sea: you, my wife, are the land, firm and safe. All these word-bubbles come from that unlucky bath in the sea (that is, even a man's most cherished experiences become worthless to him, or seem so, as his physical and mental powers approach death): with your hand on my heart, I promise never to go bathe in the sea again (that is, taste the varied life of the world), nor bask therein, beneath the blue sky (that is, dream after an ideal development of souls). I will live and die a quiet married man, living in the town, and not in this tower apart, where one may mount to its parapet, and get a sight of that tempting sea (that is, I will bring my thoughts into ordinary practical life, and not let them go off to dreamy heights, nor occupy themselves with the knotty problems of life, among men's and women's souls). Let our house be sober and prosaic, with for ornament only some shell picked up where the angry water cast it once, or seaweed that gets damp and soft at threatening of sea storm or wind (that is, let me have nothing to do with the life of souls in the world but a memory or two, and now and then news of those who still are in the fight of thought and passion): soon I shall grow to be astonished how I could ever have gone out, in the sunshine and springtide of my life, to swim in the sea of thought and passion—the more astonished, as time goes on, and brings me warning that I grow too old for such enterprise. Come, be but flesh and blood, and no ghost; smile at me to show you are real, and enter our house for good and all; let fate bolt the door fast, and shut you and me inside, never to wander again. (§ 132) Only, you are not accustomed to have my constancy tried by my being run after by one like Fifine. See here, some one has just slipped a letter between my palm and my glove. It must be from her. Did I unconsciously put two Napoleons between the two half francs I put in her tambourine? Now don't threaten to leave me; I must go and clear the matter up. I'll be back in five minutes: if I'm not, I give you leave to "slip from flesh and blood, and play the ghost again" (that is, after all he has said, Fifine's attraction is stronger than his philosophy).]

EPILOGUE.

As I was sitting, in my house late, alone, weary, my wife came back to me. I said to her, Let us leave this old house, every brick of which is stained with sin and shame. She said, Well, leave it; but let our leaving be done decently in order. Yes, I said; but time has dragged so. *The neighbours have been each gossiping fools; such fancies came*

to plague me: if you only knew what a bad time I have had down here. She said, Do you think I was much better off up there?

I said, Help me to get away: what epitaph shall we write, by way of notice to the parish of our removal? Here lies M. or N. departed from this life, such a day, month, and year? What shall we put for final flourish,—prose or verse?

"Affliction sore long time he bore

Till God did please to grant him ease":

or what? Do end it. She said, I end with Love is all and Death is nought.

In this Epilogue the poet imagines himself alone at the end of his life, and weary with the world, symbolized by his house; he imagines his wife comes to him from heaven at his death, and they leave the world together for good and all, to live in a fairer world, where their love is all and their death nothing.

III. A STATEMENT DIVIDING THE MAIN SUBJECTS OF THE POEM INTO THREE HEADS.

The poem is put into the form of a monologue, spoken by a man; throughout he introduces observations and objections made by his wife, each of which he discusses and answers. The whole Poem is dramatic: the speaker is any man you like, of high attainments, lofty aspirations, strong emotions, and capricious will. Being such a man, he deals partly with Truth, somewhat with Sophism. His reasoning is good so far as his intellect and aspiration direct it; but the last section of the poem proves the truth of his own philosophy (embodied in the swimmer symbol), namely, that a man reaching after too high an ideal is likely to fall the lower, the higher he has striven to reach. The clearest way of showing where he uses (1) Truth, (2) Sophism, (3) a mixture of both—is to say that wherever he speaks of Fifine (whether as type or not) in relation to himself and his own desire for truth, or right living with his wife, he is sophistical; wherever he speaks directly of his wife's value to him (except in the quotation from the poem, pp. 197-8) he speaks truth with an alloy of sophism; and whenever he speaks impersonally he speaks the truth. The man and his wife are cultivated people of independent means living at Pornic in Brittany. It is Pornic fair, and the fair has tempted thither a company of strolling actors, rope-dancers, and athletes. The husband takes the beauty of this strolling company, Fifine, as a type, *first*, of womanhood, to point the moral of man's relations with women; *second*, as a symbol of any influence good or bad which a wise man is bound to make use of for his soul's develop-

ment during its life in this world only. Using her for a text, ~~he~~ moralizes on certain facts and ideas connected with the life of ~~any~~ individual man, as a gregarious and progressive being, among collective men and women. He says in substance :—

I. I take Fifine as an instance of woman in relation to man, and show you her character as a woman. I show you that although her idiosyncrasy apparently defies social laws, she virtually observes them as strictly and with as high a sense of honour, so far as they concern her relations with her own people, as any delicate lady. That is, she is, physically and morally, true now to her husband and her family, and let her antecedents have been what they may, whenever now she frankly displays her charms for money, it is for the sake of her husband and people alone. To such a man as me, at any rate, she gives nothing but the sight of her. Therefore, she has her real value in the scale of human beings. And by proving to you thus that I know her worst and best qualities, and take her at her value, I prove also that through my learning to know thus much, I am so much the wiser, and have besides increased my power of valuing your far higher qualities, and being true to you as a high-minded and cultured wife. This simple example of how learning a single fact about some one else enhances the value of my life, and through mine, yours and mine together,—leads me to the wider question of how and why people choose each other as man and wife. In discussing this question, I begin by using Plato's theory of each soul seeking its complementary soul; and to illustrate and enforce it, try to solve the question thus :—As the artist is always seeking to make a complete whole from a part,—and as Art is the love of loving, the rage to know, see, and feel absolute truth for its own sake alone,—so the seeking soul is, by the necessity of its being, compelled to find out and set free from its bodily and other hindrances the true character of its complementary soul. But, in order that two such souls may come together, they must each gain their right to do so by learning the world, each in its own way. What each soul thus acquires is its own, to be given only to such other soul whose acquirements complement those. By such a process I claim to have found and to hold you.

a. You object; the process is good as regards soul, but why do I choose Fifine as an example of the world which is to be learned? Is not her physical beauty apt to dazzle and seduce me? I answer, No, it is not: my learning Fifine is, in small, merely a type of my learning the world in large. So in answering your objection I will use the type and the antitype interchangeably. The world, then, is to man's soul what the sea is to a swimmer who is, not treading, but standing or hanging *in water*: as long as he keeps still, with his head well back, the swimmer

can always breathe the air and see the sky. If he, unmindful of the law that his body is heavier than the water, tries to rise out of it, the water yields round him, and his heavier body sinks, and he is immersed, with punishment of tasting brine and choking. So, if a man, living in the world, is so unmindful of *its* laws that he tries while there to lift his bodily part out of it, and soar to an ideal life fit only for his soul when it has left his body, the laws of the world assert themselves on his body, and his soul becomes more deeply and disagreeably immersed in the world, than if, using his body in conformity with the laws of the world in which alone it can live, he had left his soul free to see and feel the eternity which will some day be its native element. Now, as the swimmer learns by the disagreeable experiment of one or two tries to rise up out of the water, that the laws of gravitation are against him, so the man who tries to raise his body into the region his soul only can live in, learns by the collapse of his effort, and its ill effect on his soul, that the laws of the world are against him : that the world must be used patiently and skilfully while the body lives in it, in order to give the soul power of living and developing at all. This being so, just as the greater the patience and skill of the swimmer, the more easily and frequently can he see and breathe sky and air, so the greater the patience and skill acquired by the man in using the world, the easier at any time becomes his temporary escape from it, and power to give his soul breathing and seeing space.

To complete the analogy, and take up Fifine as a type or instance again ; I in the world, as the swimmer in the sea, find and touch Fifine, as the swimmer might find and touch some sea-denizen : it gives the swimmer a momentary support of his hands to keep his head above water ; my learning her, so touched in passing through my world's life, has helped me to find your soul, above the world. Thus, having already proved the use of Fifine in the world independently of me, I prove her use to me in learning life, and above all being worthier of you.

b. You object again : Why will I only accept a woman's help, not a man's ?

Because men's souls do not work towards each other in the way described in my development of Plato's theory. That is only done between man and woman, by reason of their relative natures,—man claiming and receiving, woman offering and giving, all. Women only expect you to show them *your* best self, and they give you in return all of *their* best. Women alone show me, from yourself to Fifine, that since I have worked to learn this world for the sake of one other soul, my soul is a fact. Even if the lowest of women, Fifine, knows me so, I shall expect to learn truth at last : how much more if my wife does !

c. You object again: Why is not one woman, the wife, enough?

Because, in life as it stands, a man must come across many women whose natures can help him, nowise guiltily, and take his soul on many a harmless excursion in which he simply learns something new to enrich his and his wife's life. Even Fifine can do, has done, thus much for me already, by my merely seeing her to-day and talking about her to you; and, using her as a type once more, the fact of my so seeing and talking about her proves (by my not being further allured by her) my truth to you, as it could not otherwise have been proved. Now, taking Fifine still as a type only, let us see why she does attract at all. Is it not her very avowal that, for such as you and me, she *professes* to lie, to act, to be not her true self, while the rest of the world professes truth, yet lies? You praise an actor in proportion as he disguises himself and makes his part telling; the more unlike he makes his part to his real self, the greater his success. In life, each of us really acts a part; our flesh does, and conceals our soul: each one's business then is to find the other soul, in spite of the fleshly obstruction; and to learn how to do this unerringly is the lesson of a life of seventy years. My bringing forward Fifine and her tribe and showing you what they really are, is just an instance, a single specimen of such lessons.

II. Now, take what I have said,—of the way the soul learns, the way souls come together, and the way each soul in learning gains experience in reading other souls, as the outcome, the impulse, of a day-dream. And let me go on to tell you,—not in further illustration merely, but with reference also to the necessity man is under to study his kind, not only in relation to woman generally, but also in relation to his ultimate development towards fitness for his complementary woman's soul,—an actual dream I had this morning. After bathing in the sea, I sat down and played Schumann's Carnival, and dozing afterwards seemed to see the Carnival at Venice. I looked at it as from a height. I saw an immense concourse of masked men and women, each mask showing in some grotesque or brutalized way what the man had become through passion, love, or hate. If they spoke, I could not understand them. I had to learn their real motives from their masks. And I found that I could only really learn their natures right by coming down among them. Then their masks showed less divergence from humanity, and the more closely I examined them, the more each quality thus learned assumed its proper use, and seemed good for something. And from my study of each and all of these qualities, good and bad, I gained what seemed in my dream to be my object, namely, the desire to know the reason of my own life and live it truly. Then in *my dream* I became aware that this was not Venice Carnival, but the

world, and all men and women, moving among temples, and halls of science and art. These buildings I now turned to watch, having in my dream learned the men and women who frequented them; and I saw change at work in every building. Each seemed to fade, and grow into new shapes, always for the time satisfying the needs of the crowd. But while halls of science and art were always changing, religious buildings always kept some temple-shape. And I heard one Voice high said that Truth, the permanent, was thus continually manifesting itself under changing and false shapes, to keep men looking for her, and wanting her; and that "all is change, with permanence beneath." And as the Voice spoke, the building-shapes in my dream gradually fused into one primeval type, a Druid monument.

The meaning of my dream I take to be that change means falsehood; truth, permanence. You see the lesson is really the same as that shown by my lesson from Fifine; namely, that as in my dream I had to go down among men, see them on their own ground, not from a lofty standpoint of soul-pride, and thus find out men's nature beneath their masks, and the meaning of the change in institutions; so in actual life each soul must go into the world and live in it as it is, humbly, and so learn, by searching through the shows of sense, what other souls mean, always for the purpose of fitting its ultimate sum of experience into that of its complementary soul, and this for love's sake and truth's sake alone: that truth can only be found at last by gradually learning the meaning of its successive false manifestations, and that in the end truth absolute and unveiled is the reward of such seeking souls. And that the way in which absolute truth will at last be learned will be through all races of men uniting in a simple belief in one God, and living our life as in His presence, seems to be the lesson taught to me by the fusing of all temples and buildings of art and science into the primal shape of the Druid monument.

III. So I have put before you, (1) as fancies evoked by the company of strolling actors, and Fifine their representative; (2) and in my dream of the Carnival, certain ideas about the best development of my soul, or any competent man's, in the direction of learning the truths of life in order to achieve the highest form of love,—that of husband and wife. Let me go on to imagine that my whole life has been so passed, and just as we two turn homeward now, after our stroll, at the end of day, so I turn to the end of my life. What has been the result of my life after all? Whatever experience my soul gained through my body's union with the world, it can have no triumph on this earth, because it finds itself face to face with death, which takes it away from the body, and renders it powerless to work further in the

way it has worked all through this life. So the result of all is only that at least the soul so working towards its complementary soul has been steadfast to that end, and that all its constancy, as all its effort after experience, can only end in the supreme love of a man for his wife. But the flesh is weak: and love you as I may, I cannot resist the temptation of going to see Fifine, and justifying my going by the most transparent of excuses.

A word as to the connection of the Prologue and Epilogue with the main body of the poem, and with each other. In the Prologue, the poet, by the image of a swimmer floating in the sea, over whose head a butterfly sails past, suggests that his life of passion and thought in this world may be watched, by the soul of his love, from a purer region of heaven where she waits for him to join her. In the body of the poem,—the imaginary husband and wife being both alive on this earth, and living together,—the husband uses the like image of a swimmer in the sea, and highly elaborates it to show his wife how he too can and should use the world as it is, to gain experience, and develop his soul's powers, for his and his wife's sake. This idea is further developed by other similes, ending with the dream of Venice Carnival, and is finally dismissed with the avowal that a time comes in man's life when such enterprise of passion and thought must be laid aside, and he must wait quietly in his house,—his life in the world—for Death. From which conclusion we come naturally to the Epilogue, where, as "the Householder," the poet, at the end of his life (sitting alone in his house—his life in the world), is visited by his wife's soul or spirit, which has come to meet his; and together they leave the turmoil of this world, for the calm of that heaven of love and truth which is imaged in the Prologue.

IV. SYNOPSIS.

The poem then divides itself into three heads. I. What ought to be a married man's relations to other women. II. What his relations to the world generally. III. The use of these two relations towards achieving the highest form of love between husband and wife.

I. A husband ought to use the influence on him of any woman he comes to know as a means of developing his nature for his wife's and his own sake. II. He should use the world generally with a like object. III. His love for his wife becomes complete and lasting in proportion as he thoroughly learns the nature of other men and women. These three propositions are variously illustrated in the poem; the sum of what is *said in support of the general proposition* (contained under the three

heads), that man must use every chance to develop his soul for love's sake and truth's, is as follows :—

From the lowest to the highest, each created being has its own individual perfection, and a chance of displaying it. To achieve this individual perfection, each human soul works towards finding out the Truth, the Absolute, which lies hid under the false shows of the world. The knowledge thus gained belongs to the soul that gains it; but as souls develop, each acquires its knowledge, does its work, for the sake of, and to be imparted to, the man or woman found in its search after Truth, and loved best, towards finding and loving whom it is always striving. To try and find Truth under the shows of the world, we must mix with men and not stay apart, nor ignore the laws of the world around us. By watching men and their institutions throughout a life of 70 years, now and then an exceptional man may, even now, achieve complete knowledge of the true nature of all men. And when in the development of souls, all men have learned to *know*, then all knowledge and all religious beliefs will fuse into one simple belief in God, and in living our life as in His sight, and Truth will display unveiled the principle of all things, highest and least.

NOTE.

It is not my purpose here to write an essay on the poem, or discuss its merits. But it may fairly be said, that in the process of exhausting every argument by which he can justify his unfaithfulness to his wife, this Don Juan certainly puts before us, in every word he utters, truths at least as valuable to an honest man who seeks to learn how his life should be lived among men and women, and specially among women, as they are specious when used by himself in excuse for frailty. I think the character Browning has conceived (as sketched at p. 223) is one very apt to be swayed by either emotions or intellectual subtleties, according as one or the other may happen to appeal to his senses, his higher affections, or his mind, at any given moment; and that while he never ceases to love and admire his wife, that love and admiration have at no time such command over the reckless, pleasure-loving part of his nature as to conquer the fascination of any fresh experience in passion or emotion, when presented to him even in such ephemeral and purely physical guise as the dancer Fifine. Even when he gives her money, deceiving his wife as to the sum given (§ 24), and goes on to speak of her vices and virtues alike impartially (§§ 24-32 inclusive), he has, I think, no immediate idea of an intrigue. The money is given under the sudden

impulse of admiration for her beauty; the same impulse prompts the description of her, so far as it deals generously with the necessity of her life, and her past degradation. As sudden an impulse causes him to run after her at the end. But the thoughts to which he gives expression throughout the poem cause him for the moment a pleasure as acute (though different in kind) as the sight of Fifine, his love for his wife, or his bath in the sea. And perhaps the sting of the satire which runs through the whole lies in the simple fact that the noble vindication of Fifine's life, and the yet nobler truths which, directly or indirectly, the sight of her prompts him to utter, would have remained unspoken had she been ugly instead of beautiful.

VII. MR. NETTLESHIP'S

CLASSIFICATION OF BROWNING'S WORKS.

BROWNING has implied or avowed (in his Essay on Shelley, in the dedication to *Sordello*, in the Epilogue to *Pacchiarotto* and elsewhere) his belief that study of the soul of man,—his true essence which is to live or die, develop or dwindle, according as opportunities are used or wasted,—is the poet's highest aim. The Dramas apart, I have therefore thought this leading idea should be first dealt with in classifying. So I have begun by grouping together under three heads, all poems whose avowed or obvious primary subject is either the whole life or some ruling incident in the life of a man or men, as tending directly to the development or degradation of souls, through this life and succeeding lives. From these main groups the transition seems easy to a group of poems dealing primarily with some form of emotion, where feeling at particular moments or periods, though not necessarily a ruling incident in the life, has its influence for good or ill—thence we come to Art, where the perceptive qualities come in aid of character and feeling to elevate man's nature; and thence to national and political feeling, which give a like aid, but by the more localized motive of race and historical tradition. The few poems classed as stories and myths, hero poems and Greek Poems, are so separated because such seems their primary character.

In this classification the word "soul" must be taken to mean a man's physical, mental, and spiritual attributes, developing inter-dependently throughout life on earth, and culminating or sinking into an identity which may or may not be immortal.

The subject under each heading is to be understood as the *primary* subject or purpose of each poem.

I. Dramas.

Strafford (1837)	...	Vol. 1	Ed. 1868	p. 207
Victor and Charles (1842)	...	" 3	"	1
Return of Druses (1843)	...	" 3	"	229
Blot in the 'Scutcheon (1843)	...	" 4	"	1
Colombe (1844)	...	" 4	"	61
Soul's Tragedy (1845)	...	" 5	"	1
Luria (1845)	...	" 5	"	43
In a Balcony (1855)	...	" 6	"	2

II. A. Poems not strictly dramatic in form, but which deal with the history, or some incident in the history, of the souls of two or more individuals, mutually acting on each other towards (1) progress, or (2) arrest, in development.

1. Progress in development, from right action at a critical moment, and right disregard of social or religious surroundings.

<i>Pippa Passes</i> (1841), Vol. 2. Ed. '68	Halbert and Hob (1879)
Ivan Ivanovitch (1879)	Ned Bratts (1879)

2. Arrest in development, from failure or mistake in action, and wrong regard for social or religious surroundings.

Statue and Bust (1855) Le Byron de nos Jours (1864) Youth and Art (1864)

3. Progress and arrest in two or more souls, from their influence on each other, and as governed by social, domestic or religious surroundings.

The Glove (1845)	<i>Ring and Book</i> (1868-9)
James Lee (1864)	<i>Red Cotton Night-Cap Country</i> (1873)
The Worst of it (1864)	<i>Inn Album</i> (1875)

II. B. The like history or incident as regards (1) progress, (2) arrest, in development of the soul of one individual.

1. Progress in development caused by (a) the individual acting on or using circumstances; (b) his or her being acted on by them.

a.	Clive (1880)
<i>Pauline</i> (1833)	
<i>Paracelsus</i> (1835)	b.
Waring (1842)	<i>Sordello</i> (1840)
A Grammarian's Funeral (1855)	Flight of the Duchess (1845). (IV. 5.)
At the Mermaid (1876)	<i>Hohenstiel-Schwangau</i> (1871)

2. Arrest in development caused by (a) like action on, or (b) being acted on by circumstances.

a.	b.
Lost Leader (1845)	Protus (1855)
	Sludge (1864)
Gold Hair (1864)	Martin Relp (1879)

III. The spiritual element in man, and the attributes of his soul; these subjects being treated (1) historically, or in narrative; (2) philosophically, or by way of speculation; (3) in connection with the idea of, or faith in, God as a radical element in man's nature; (4) in reference to that quality in man's nature which demands and believes in a continuity of life before and after physical death.

1. <i>Historically, or in narrative.</i>	2. <i>Philosophically, or by way of speculation.</i>
Ben Karshook (1856)	Cleon (1855)
Pacchiarotto (1876)	<i>Fine at the Fair</i> (1872)
House (1876)	Pisgah-Sights I & II (1876)
Shop (1876)	Bifurcation (1876)
Filippo Balducci on the Privilege of Burial (1876)	Lines preluding 2d Series of Dramatic Idylls (1880)
<i>Pietro of Abano</i> (1880)	

3. *In connection with the idea of, or faith in, God.*

(1845-55)
 Patriot (1855) (? VI)
 and Angel (1844)
 Twins (1854)
 Sic's Tragedy (1855) (? IV. 5)
 Cross-Day (1855) (? IV. 5)
 Christmas Eve (1850)
 or Day (1850)

Karshish (1855)
 Johannes Agricola (1836)
 Blougram (1855)
 Death in the Desert (1864)
 Caliban (1864)
 Epilogue to *Dramatis Personæ* (1864)
 Fears and Scruples (1876)

reference to that quality in man's nature which demands and believes in a continuity of life before and after physical death.

Evelyn Hope (1855)	...	Vol. 3, <i>Works</i> , Ed. 1868, p. 110
Rabbi Ben Ezra (1864)	" 6	" 99
Prospice (1864)	" 6	" 153
Apparent Failure (1864)		
La Saisiaz, and lines preceding it (1878)		

7. Poems dealing with some play of human emotion, caused by,—
 1. Love; 2. Hate; 3. Love and Hate; 4. Love of Animals; 5. Humour.

1. *Love.*a. *Husband and wife.*

by the Fireside (1855)
 Wife to any Husband (1855)
 to Gismond (1842)
 Word More (1855)

b. *Mutual love.*

Long at Night (1845)
 Long at Morning (1845)
 Human's Last Word (1855)
 among the Ruins (1855)
 Lover's Quarrel (1855)
 Instability (1855)
 Days (1855)
 Perilism (1855)
 Gondola (1842)
 Sessions (1864)
 and Death (1867)

c. *Self-Renunciation.*

Lost Mistress (1845)
 Way of Love (1855)
 Last Ride Together (1855)
 Worship or endeavour—ennobling
 influence of Love.
 In fancies. (1) The Flowers Name
 (1845)
 Far (1855)
 Conceptions (1855)
 In a Life (1855)
 In a Love (1855)
 In and Roses (1855)
 to the Lady of Tripoli (1842)
 Que to Pacchiarotto (1876)
 Al Magic (1876)

Magical Nature (1876)
 Poem following two Poets of Croisic

e. *One sided or incomplete love.*

Cristina (1842)
 Two in the Campagna (1855)
 A Serenade at the Villa (1855)
 Another way of Love (1855)
 In a Year (1845)
 Time's Revenges (1845)
 A Light Woman (1855)
 Porphyria's Lover (1836)
 Too Late (1864)
 A Face (1864)
 A Likeness (1864)
 Numpholeptos (1876)
 Appearances (1876)
 St. Martin's Summer (1876)

f. *Ephemeral love.*

Earth's Immortalities. (1) Love (1845)
 A Pretty Woman (5?) (1855)

2. *Hate.*

Soliloquy of Spanish Cloister (5?) (1842)
 Instans Tyrannus (1855)

3. *Love and Hate acting on each other.*

(a) *From man to woman.* (b) *From woman to man.* (c) *Between men.*

a.

My Last Duchess (1842)
 A Forgiveness (1876)

b.

The Laboratory (1844)
 The Confessional (1845)

c.

Before (1855)
 After (1855)

4. *Love for or in animals.*

How they brought the Good News from
Ghent to Aix (1845)
Tray (1879)
Muléké (1880)

5. *Humour or Satire.*

Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis (1844)
Up at a Villa—Down in the City (1855)
Doctor — (1880)

V. Art, Plastic and otherwise.
4. Sculpture, and Architecture.

1. *Poetry and Poets.*

Popularity (1855)
Memorabilia (1855)
Transcendentalism (1855)
How it Strikes a Contemporary (1855)
Two Poets of Croisic (1878)
Epilogue to Pacchiarotto (1876)
'Touch him ne'er so lightly,' 2nd Dram.
Idylls (1880)

2. *Music and Musicians.*

A Toccata of Galuppi's (1855)
Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha (1855)

1. Poetry ; 2. Music ; 3. Painting

Abt Vogler (1864)

3. *Painting and Painters.*

Old Pictures in Florence (1855)
Pictor Ignotus (1845)
Fra Lippo Lippi (1855)
Guardian Angel (1855)
Andrea del Sarto (1855)
Eurydice (1864)

4. *Sculpture, and Architecture.*

The Bishop orders his Tomb at St.
Praxed's (1845)
Deaf and Dumb (1868)

VI. The expression of some (1) national or (2) political feeling.

1.

Cavalier Tunes (1842)
Nationality in Drinks (1844-5)
De Gustibus (1855)
Home Thoughts from Abroad (1845)
Home Thoughts from the Sea (1845)

Through the Metidja to Abd-el-Kadr
(1842)
Incident of the French Camp (1842)

2.

Italian in England (1845)
Englishman in Italy (1845)

VII. Hero Poems.

Hervé Riel (1871)

Pheidippides (1879)

Echetlos (1880)

VIII. (1) Stories, or (2) Myths.

1.

Pied Piper of Hamelin (IV. 5 ?) (1842)
Childe Roland (1855)
Cenciaja (1864)

2.

Artemis Prologizes (1842)
Pan and Luna (1880)

IX. Greek Poems.

Balaustion's Adventure (1871)

Aristophanes' Apology (1875)

Agamemnon (1877)

CLASSIFICATION OF BROWNING'S POEMS.

I REGRET very much that there should be any question of classifying Mr. Browning's works; but as I have been desired to classify them in the manner I thought least open to objection, I propose the following scheme; because its divisions are *natural*, or answering to received general forms of mental activity; because only natural divisions supply terms large enough to cover in any degree the varied suggestions of the majority of the poems; because only such a system of division excludes all arbitrary judgment or undue emphasis of the *motive or leading thought* of the poems, whether displayed by them singly or as a whole,—while any judgment which gives prominence to motive, however justly recognized, in a work of art, is unjust to it *as such*, by ignoring the spontaneous creative impulse through which the motive has come to light; because even the partial *misplacing* of a poem among large mental categories fails to touch it as an artistic whole, while any mistaken attempt at specification by motive or feeling distorts it as an artistic whole. I propose this scheme, in short, because its defects are chiefly negative, not because I imagine that it is free from defects. The dramatic setting of most of the lyrics converts them into studies of character, and fits them nearly as much for the psychological group as for the lyrical, in which Mr. Browning's prefix *dramatic* has justified their inclusion. Several of the psychological poems are natural, though not intentional, *satires*. No one section, as judged by its contents, is firmly divided from the other: and I have introduced the heading "*critical*" with great doubt of its right to enter into the scheme at all; since all forms of criticism, not purely technical, belong to some branch of philosophy and are contained in that idea: but I have done so because *Old Pictures in Florence* raises too many questions to stand for anything but the expression of a generally critical mood; and I have allowed *Aristophanes' Apology* to keep it company, though, besides being critical in mood, it exhibits the nature of the man, and is therefore psychological,—the characteristics of his age, and is therefore historical,—an imaginary succession of incidents, and is therefore romantic,—and a philosophy of life which is at once artistic and practical.

These facts are, however, of no importance in a scheme which is meant to expose the difficulties of classifying Mr. Browning's work rather than to overcome them: and in claiming a certain negative merit for this mode of grouping, I also disclaim for it any positive usefulness whatever. I put it in no sense forward as a working alternative to the rival plan. Its semi-scientific terms would alone suffice to prevent its serving as index to a popular abstract of Mr. Browning's poems. It simply conveys my sense of the dilemma in which the alleged necessity for anything calling itself a classification of these poems must land us.

A. ISOLATED GROUPS.

1. *Dramas.*

Strafford.

King Victor and King Charles.

The Return of the Druses.

A Blot in the 'Scutcheon.

Colombe's Birthday.

A Soul's Tragedy.

Luria.

In a Balcony.

2. *Translations from the Greek.*

Alkestis (Balaustion's Adventure).

Herakles in "Aristophanes' Apology."

Agamemnon.

3. *Mythological Poems.*

Artemis Prologizes.

Thamuris of Thrace (fragment of song in "Aristophanes' Apology").

Pheidippides.

Echetlos.

Pan and Luna.

B. CLASSIFIED GROUPS.

I. LYRICAL.

One Word More (to E. B. B.).

I. Marching Along } Cavalier
II. Give a Rouse } Tunes.
III. Boot and Saddle }

Garden Fancies.

The Confessional.

The lost Mistress.

Parting at Morning.

Song.

A Woman's last Word.

Evelyn Hope.

Love among the Ruins.

A Lover's Quarrel.

Up at a Villa—Down in the City.

A Toccata of Galuppi's.

Home Thoughts from Abroad.

Home Thoughts from the Sea.

Saul.

My Star.

By the Fire-side.

Any Wife to any Husband.

Two in the Campagna.

Misconceptions.

A Serenade at the Villa.

One Way of Love.

Love in a Life.

Life in a Love.

In three days.

In a year.

Women and Roses.

Before.

After.

The Guardian Angel (a picture at Fano).

Memorabilia.

Rudel to the Lady of Tripoli.

The Worst of it.

Too Late.

Abt Vogler.

May and Death.

Prospice.

LYRICAL (*continued*).

Eurydice to Orpheus (a picture by Leighton).	Natural Magic.
A Face.	Magical Nature.
Epilogue to "Dramatis Personæ."	Numpholeptos.
Prologue to "Pacchiarotto."	Prologue to "The Two Poets of Croisic."

II. NON-LYRICAL.

C. PHILOSOPHICAL.

1. <i>In the Religious sense.</i>	Popularity.
Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day.	How it strikes a Contemporary.
Rabbi Ben Ezra.	Deaf and Dumb, a Group by Woolner.
A Death in the Desert.	Youth and Art.
Apparent Failure.	Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau.
La Saisiaz.	Pacchiarotto, and how he worked in distemper.
2. <i>In the Moral sense.</i>	Shop.
A Light Woman.	Pisgah Sights, I.
Dis aliter visum.	Pisgah Sights, II.
Bifurcation.	Pietro of Abano.
3. <i>In the Practical sense.</i>	4. <i>In the Artistic sense.</i>
Earth's Immortalities (Fame).	Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha.
A Pretty Woman.	Transcendentalism.
Respectability.	
The Statue and the Bust.	

D. PSYCHOLOGICAL.

Pauline.	Johannes Agricola in Meditation.
Paracelsus.	Pictor Ignotus.
Sordello.	Fra Lippo Lippi.
Pippa Passes.	Andrea del Sarto.
The Lost Leader.	The Bishop orders his Tomb, &c.
Soliloquy of the Spanish Cloister.	Bishop Blougram's Apology.
The Laboratory.	Cleon.
Cristina.	In a Balcony.
Another way of Love.	James Lee's Wife.
Time's Revenges.	Caliban upon Setebos.
Incident of the French Camp.	Confessions.
The Patriot; an old story.	A Likeness.
My last Duchess (Ferrara).	Sludge the Medium.
Instans Tyrannus.	The Ring and the Book.
Waring.	Red Cotton Night-Cap Country.
The last Ride Together.	The Inn Album.
A Grammarian's Funeral.	At the "Mermaid."
Porphyria's Lover.	House.
An Epistle containing the strange medical experience of Karshish, the Arab physician.	Fears and Scruples.
	Appearances.
	A Forgiveness.

PSYCHOLOGICAL (*continued*).

The two Poets of Croisic, and Conclusion.	Ned Bratts.
Fine at the Fair.	Clive.
Martin Relph.	Muléké.
Halbert and Hob.	Concluding lines to II. Series of "Dramatic Idyls."
Ivàn Ivànovitch.	

E. CRITICAL.

Old Pictures in Florence.	Aristophanes' Apology.
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F. HISTORICAL.

Hervé Riel.	Cenciaja.
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G. ROMANTIC.

How they brought the good news from Ghent to Aix.	The Pied Piper of Hamelin (a child's story written for and inscribed to W. M. the younger).
Through the Metidja to Abd-el-Kadr.	The Flight of the Duchess.
Nationality in Drinks.	The Heretic's Tragedy (a middle-age Interlude).
Count Gismond—Aix in Provence.	Protus.
The Boy and the Angel.	"Childe Roland to the dark Tower came."
Mesmerism.	Gold Hair; a story of Pornic.
The Glove (Peter Ronsard <i>lo-quitur</i>).	St. Martin's Summer.
The Italian in England.	Prologue to "La Saisiaz."
In a Gondola.	Doctor — (Dramatic Idyls).
The Twins.	

H. DESCRIPTIVE.

Meeting at Night.	De Gustibus.	The Englishman in Italy.
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I. SATIRICAL.

<i>Gravely.</i>	of Burial (a reminiscence of A.D. 1676).
Holy-Cross Day.	Epilogue to "Pacchiarotto" and other Poems.
<i>Humorously.</i>	Tray.
Earth's Immortalities (Love).	Introductory Lines to the II. Series of "Dramatic Idyls."
Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis.	
Filippo Baldinucci on the privilege	

IX.

NOTES ON THE GENIUS OF ROBERT BROWNING.

BY JAMES THOMSON.

(Read at the 3rd Meeting of the Browning Society, on Friday, Jan. 27, 1882.)

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| 1. Br.'s <i>Variety and Knowledge</i> , p. 237. | 4. Br.'s <i>Activity and Rapidity</i> , p. 242. |
| 2. <i>The Charge of Obscurity</i> , p. 238. | 5. Br.'s <i>Manliness</i> , p. 244. |
| 3. <i>The Charge of Harshness</i> , p. 240, and
of Affectation, which really means
Naturalness, p. 241. | 6. Br.'s <i>Vitality</i> , p. 245. |
| | 7. Br.'s <i>Christianity</i> , p. 246. |

1. Br.'s *Variety and Knowledge*. Perhaps a reader looking for the first time through Browning's volumes would be first struck by the remarkable number and variety of his works, though these now cover a period of fifty years. On a somewhat closer acquaintance, this reader would surely be impressed with an ever-increasing astonishment at the prodigious amount and variety of knowledge brought to bear upon so vast a range of subjects. I mean not only, nor even mainly, knowledge of literature and art, but also what I may term knowledge of things in general. Marvellous as his acquirements in the former kinds must appear to one who, like myself, is neither scholar nor connoisseur, I am yet more overwhelmed by the immensity of his acquisitions in this other kind, by what Mr. Swinburne has happily summed up as "the inexhaustible stores of his perception." Not all of us have the opportunity of mastering the contents of libraries and museums and art-galleries; but all of us have the opportunity of mastering the common facts of nature and human life; yet it is precisely in these departments of knowledge that Browning's pre-eminence appears to me most decided. With the great majority of us the senses are dull, the perceptions slow and vague and confused; Browning drinks in the living world at every pore. There exist, in fact, some men so rarely endowed that their minds are as revolving mirrors, which, without effort, reflect clearly everything that passes before them and around them in the world of life, and without effort retain all the images constantly ready for use; while we ordinary men can only with fixed purpose and long endeavour catch and keep some very small fragments of the whole. Chaucer, Rabelais, Shakspeare, Ben Jonson, Goethe, Scott, Balzac, are familiar examples of this quietly rapacious, indefinitely capacious acquisitiveness, men of whom we can say, "They have learned everything and forgotten nothing"; and the star of Browning is of the first magnitude in this constellation.

2. *Charge of Obscurity.* But we have heard of great scholars who could only communicate a plentiful lack of ideas in many languages, of very learned men who were simply Dryasdusts, of people with keen perceptiveness and tenacious memories whose minds or no-minds were of the Dame Quickly order, though I do not remember any combination of both the scholar and the keen retentive observer with the dullard. The heaped-up knowledge is as heaped-up fuel: the questions occur, Is the fire intense enough to kindle the whole mass through and through into clear glow of light and heat? or but strong enough to smoulder smokily under it? or so relatively weak as to be crushed out by it? Here the admirers of Browning directly join issue with the common critics, and the public led or misled by them, who assert that his fire is of the second or smoky species. As he himself puts it with humorous contempt in the *Pacchiarotto* (1876)—

"Then he who directed the measure—
An old friend—put leg forward nimbly,
'We critics as sweeps out your chimbley!
Much soot to remove from your flue, sir,
Who spares coals in kitchen, an't you, sir,
And neighbours complain it's no joke, sir,
—You ought to consume your own smoke, sir.'
'Ah, rogues, but my housemaid suspects you,
Is confident oft she detects you
In bringing more filth into my house
Than ever you found there!—I'm pious,
However: 'twas God made you dingy.'"

I shall not attempt to argue this issue here, as Mr. Swinburne in his excellent Critical Essay on George Chapman has discussed it with admirable power and eloquence, and to my mind conclusively, in general vindication of the great poet against the small critics "as sweeps out his chimbley." I will venture to add but one remark of my own on this matter. Many years since, in 1864 or '5, I wrote: "Robert Browning, a true and splendid genius, though his vigorous and restless talents often overpower and run away with his genius, so that some of his creations are left but half-retrieved from chaos." This now seems to me put much too strongly, save perhaps in reference to *Sordello* and a very few of the minor poems; but I still think that it points to a real fault in his art—a fault, however, be it observed, of overplus, not of insufficiency. Such overpowering talents are almost as rare as the sometimes overpowered genius. Landor, writing it is true about twenty years earlier, said similarly of Browning: "I only wish he would atticise a little. Few of the Athenians had such a quarry on their property, but *they constructed* better roads for the conveyance of the material." And *such comments* but mark what Coleridge has noted in a certain stage of

the development of Shakspeare: "The intellectual power and the creative energy wrestle as in a war-embrace." And the wrestling is mighty when both the athletes are Titanic.

Admitting that *Sordello* is very hard, if not obscure, I would observe that the difficulty is not so much in the mere language, as in the abrupt transitions, the rapid discursions, and the continual recondite allusions to matters with which very few readers can be familiar.¹ The yet young fire, struggling with its enormous mass of gnarled and intertangled fuel, burns murkily with fitful sheets of splendid flame, and the mass of metal is not thoroughly fused for the mould; the result differing herein decisively from the magnificent *Sordello* of the *Purgatorio* (VI.), defined, solid, massive, as if cast colossal in bronze, the most superb figure, I think, in all Dante; him who leaps from his haughty impassibility to embrace Virgil at the one word 'Mantuan,' kindling the Florentine to the fulgurant invective *Ahi serva Italia*; the *Sordello* of that noble passage, not to be rendered into English:—

"Ma vedi là un anima che posta
Sola soletta versa noi riguarda;
Quella ne'nsegnerà la via più tosta.
Venimmo a lei: O anima Lombarda,
Come ti stavi altera e disdegnosa,
E nel mover degli occhj onesta e tarda!
Ella non ci diceva alcuna cosa,
Ma lasciavene gir, solo guardando
A guisa di leon quando si posa."

"But look and mark that spirit posted there
Apart, alone, who gazes as we go;
He will instruct us how we best may fare.
We came to him: O Lombard spirit, lo,
What pride and scorn thy bearing then expressed,
The movement of thine eyes how firm and slow!
No word at all he unto us addressed,
But let us pass, only regarding still
In manner of a lion when at rest."

Yet no good judge who watched how strenuously this still youthful genius was wrestling with the difficult and almost indomitable subject-matter of *Sordello*, could help foreseeing its triumphant mastery over whatever it might undertake when its slow strong growth should be fully mature. To my mind this thorough maturity was reached in the two volumes of *Men and Women*, published in 1855. There had been previous poems mature as well as great; but in this collection, distributed under various headings in the 6 vol. edition of 1868, I found, and find, *all* the leading pieces mature; the fire burns intensely clear,

¹ Mr. J. T. Nettleship gives a very careful analysis of the poem in his volume.

completely consuming its own smoke. To name a score of the fifty: *Karshish* and *Cleon*, *Andrea del Sarto* and *Fra Lippo Lippi*, *A Toccata of Galuppi's*, *Bishop Blougram*, *In a Balcony*, *Childe Roland*, *Two in the Campagna*, *A Serenade at the Villa*, *Memorabilia*, *Respectability*, *Instans Tyrannus*, *Holy Cross Day*, *The Statue and the Bust*, *Evelyn Hope*, *The Guardian Angel*, *By the Fireside* (whose Greek promise has already been so amply fulfilled), *Any Wife to Any Husband*, *One Word More*, and, higher than the rest, as its hero was higher than any of the people from the shoulders and upward, the complete *Saul*; these are not only noble in conception and aspiration, they are each in its befitting style consummate in achievement; not one of them unworthy of a great country's greatest living poet. Of the wonderful works that have followed I need not say anything here; not even of that stupendous masterpiece *The Ring and the Book*, concerning which I have recently had the opportunity of saying something elsewhere.¹

3. *Charge of Harshness.* Allied to the common charge of obscurity is that of harshness; variously attributed to negligence, wilfulness, lack of inborn melody and harmony, or, as I have been somewhat surprised to hear pretty often, deliberate affectation, this last evil propensity being made responsible for the obscurity also. As to the negligence and wilfulness, Browning has himself told us that he has always done his best; and I, for one, would take his word, even did I not find it—as I do find it—manifestly confirmed by the sincerity, the earnestness, the thoroughness of all his work. As to the lack of innate melody and harmony, how can such a charge be maintained in the face of the poems just cited, not to mention others later and still greater? But let us distinguish. His strong, intensely original, and many-sided individuality has, among finer savours, a keen relish for the odd, the peculiar, the quaint, the grotesque; and when these offer themselves in the subject-matter, his guiding genius is apt to throw the reins on the necks of the vigorous talents and eager perceptions, which run risky riot in language as quaint and grotesque as the theme. Students will recall *Sibrandus Schafnaburgensis*, *Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha*, *Old Pictures at Florence*, the Lawyers in *The Ring and the Book*. Let us admit further that, perhaps too often and inopportunately, a perplexing patter or harsh jingle has irresistible seduction for him. Thus, such lines as,

“While the patching houseleek's head of blossom winks
Through the chinks—”

cruelly remind one of “Peter Piper picked a peck of pepper”; and the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th stanzas in *Mesmerism*, clever and true as they are in themselves, appear to me not only incongruous with the main theme,

¹ ‘Gentleman's Magazine,’ Dec. 1881.

but absolutely untrue in relation to the speaker, who, with his whole mind absorbed in his self-set task, would not have noticed the petty distractions they describe. For other instances I need but mention *Waring*, *Christmas-Eve*, and *The Flight of the Duchess*; in which last splendidly original and vigorous poem, by the way, while much of the audacious grotesque of the diction is consonant with the rough forester who tells the story, much is quite incompatible with him.

In many of these cases it may be fairly contended on behalf of the poet that he but asserts and vindicates his own artistic sovereignty over the subject by holding it aloof and beneath him; by now and then good-naturedly laughing at it, as Richter, I think, says one must be able to laugh at or sport with one's faith in order to really possess it.

But whatever may be the ultimate judgment on this matter, it may be fearlessly affirmed that whenever the subject is so great and solemn as to possess the poet instead of him possessing it, be its supremacy of terror or pathos, beauty or awe, he ever rises in expression as in conception with his theme; and he has a most noble natural affinity with noble themes. Then not the mere talents or the piercing perceptions are in the ascendant, but the divine genius holds imperial sway; then pure imagination, or imaginative reason, or imaginative passion, incarnates itself in its own proper language of majestic rhythm, tenderest melody, orchestral harmony—orchestral because comprehensive and manifold with the complex simplicity and integrity of a high organism. For the rest, we do not in the grandeur of fortress or cathedral look for the minute finish and polish of carvings in gems or ivory.

Affectation means Naturalness. Lastly, as to the affectation, I have come to learn that it usually means, when objected, even by persons of superior intelligence, against any great artist of whatever kind, the direct contrary of what it is commonly supposed to mean. It means that he is supremely and exquisitely *unaffected*, being scrupulously true to his own individuality. It means that he wears the garb befitting his peculiar stature and complexion, and does not affect the passing fashions which uniform the undistinguished multitudes. If he is a writer or orator, it means that he stamps with vigorous clearness his own image and superscription on his word-mintage, affirming thus his true sovereign prerogative, instead of issuing the common currency with the common image and superscription half-effaced by multitudinous usage, not to speak of debasement by sweating and clipping—the demonetized, vulgarized vocabulary of the newspapers.

Browning himself expresses just as much esteem for the public that accuses him of harshness as for the critics who accuse him of obscurity. In the Epilogue to the *Pacchiarotto* volume (1876), written in the same

spirit as a certain famous high-minded Ode to Himself by Ben Jonson, he bursts out with jolly scorn :—

“’Tis said I brew stiff drink,
But the deuce a flavour of grape is there.
“Don’t nettles make a broth
Wholesome for blood grown lazy and thick?
Maws out of sorts make mouths out of taste.
My Thirty-four Port—no need to waste
On a tongue that’s fur, and a palate paste!
A magnum for friends who are sound! the sick—
I’ll posset and cosset them, nothing loth,
Henceforward with nettle-broth!”

Yet he could write in the Preface to the *Selections*, dated May, 1872 :
“Nor do I apprehend any more charges of being wilfully obscure, unconscientiously careless, or perversely harsh.”

4. *Activity and Rapidity.* Let us now consider some of the dominant characteristics of this wonderful genius, as manifested in its slowly-developed, long-enduring maturity.

First, one cannot help remarking the restless activity and almost unique rapidity of his intellect. Swift and keen as are his perceptions, his thoughts are swifter and keener yet. We ordinary readers are soon breathless in trying to keep up with them, and must be content to travel with relays, by easy stages, the journeys he makes at a single rush. As Mr. Swinburne excellently puts it, “He never thinks but at full speed; and the rate of his thought is to that of another man’s as the speed of a railway to that of a waggon, or the speed of a telegraph to that of a railway.” As I have had occasion to remark elsewhere, these analogies are peculiarly felicitous, inasmuch as the railway train not only runs ten times faster than the waggon, but also carries more than ten times the weight; the telegraph is not only incomparably swifter than the railway, but also incomparably more subtle and pregnant with intellect and emotion. The restless activity and rapidity and subtlety of intellect which confound the “general reader” (who has been termed the laziest and haziest of human animals), accustomed to the too-easy sauntering through popular novels and periodicals, are apt at first to perplex even the student, as perturbing the exquisite calm of the simply idyllic conceptions with which he has been familiarized by less intellectual poets. As our French neighbours say, “one must have the defect of one’s qualities”; and in Browning these mental qualities or faculties are so pre-eminently rare and valuable, so delightful and informing and suggestive, that an intelligent and athletic student soon willingly surrenders the serenest tranquillity in order to pursue their subtle and *multiplex workings*, finding this pursuit an intellectual gymnastic of *most exhilarating* as well as bracing character. But it must be

always remembered that when Browning sets himself to a task of pure and lofty imaginativeness,—as in the *Saul*, the *Serenade at the Villa*, the *Childe Roland*, *Any Wife to Any Husband*, *One Word More*, or on a larger scale in the pre-vision of the tragedy of *The Ring and the Book*, or the Caponsacchi, Pompilia, and Pope sections,—his imagination, kindling in the measure of the greatness of its theme, and so (as I have said) kindling and glorifying his style, is as intense, solemn, steadfast, irresistibly dominant, I will dare to assert, as the noblest in all our noble literature.

Heine says in one of his rough jottings, "Shakspere's big toe contained more poetry than all the Greek poets, with the exception of Aristophanes. The Greeks were great Artists, not Poets; they had more artistic sense than poetry." The same may be fairly said of many modern distinguished writers of verse, if poetry be regarded as the reflection at once intelligent and beautiful of the whole world of nature and human nature, or, lyrically, of the singer's whole inner nature in relation to the outer world, and not merely of certain choice 'bits' or dreamy moods. Now, this comprehensiveness, this sleepless intimate interest in the whole world of life around him, both the interior and exterior life, in all their kinds and degrees, which we find supreme in Shakspere, is, to my apprehension, equally supreme in Browning; and it embraces the past no less than the present, and, what is even more rare in one so learned, the present no less than the past. For the present, he himself specially notes it in *How it strikes a Contemporary*; and Landor long since noted it in the keen-eyed genial observer:

"Browning! Since Chaucer was alive and hale,
No man hath walkt along our roads with step
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue
So varied in discourse."

For the past, Browning early avowed it in the personal digression in *Sordello* :—

"—Beside, care-bit erased
Broken-up beauties ever took my taste
Supremely—" (p. 101)

And as to the interior life, we have also his own avowal in the letter of dedication prefixed to *Sordello* twenty-five years after the poem was written:

"The historical decoration was purposely of no more importance than a background requires; and my stress lay on the incidents in the development of a soul; little else is worth study."

But we need neither the testimony of others nor his own avowals on these points, so conspicuously illustrated throughout his books. For the past, besides the greatest, from *Paracelsus* through *The Ring and the Book* to *Aristophanes' Apology* we have in addition to poems

already mentioned such pieces as *The Bishop orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's* (in which Ruskin finds embodied the very spirit of the Renaissance;—I would modify, of one phase, and that the least noble, of it); *The Grammarian's Funeral* (embodying another and far nobler phase); *Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha, Pictor Ignotus, Old Pictures at Florence*; *The Heretic's Tragedy*,—which, as the cheerful case of burning the Grand Master of the Templars alive, an astonishing Edinburgh reviewer complained was not rendered in a pleasing manner! For the present, we have such pieces as *The Lost Leader*, *The Italian in England* and *The Englishman in Italy*, the noble *Home Thoughts from the Sea*, *Through the Metidja to Abd-el-Kadr*, the unique *Waring*, *Mesmerism*, *Bishop Blougram*, *Caliban on Setebos*, *Sludge the Medium*, in addition to such longer works as *Christmas-Eve and Easter-Day*, *Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau*, *Red-Cotton Nightcap-Country*, *The Inn Album*. And throughout all we have ever the dominant theme of the development or revelation of human souls; naturally most wonderful, and to myself simply overwhelming, in Browning's immense masterpiece *The Ring and the Book*. In his power of transcendent analysis interfused with the power of synthetic exposition, so that we have no dissection of corpses, but an intellectual and moral vivisection, whose subjects grow the more living in their reality the more keenly the scalpel cuts into them, the more thoroughly they are anatomized, I know not of any contemporaries who can be compared with him save Balzac, Victor Hugo, Gustave Flaubert (in *Madame Bovary*), George Meredith (as in *Emilia in England* and *The Egoist*). Carlyle in his 'French Revolution' delights in sneering at 'Victorious Analysis'; here is Victorious Analysis in a very real sense, commanding the extreme opposite of sneers.

5. *Manliness*. Further, Browning's passion is as intense, noble, and manly as his intellect is profound and subtle and therefore original. I would especially insist on its manliness, because our present literature abounds in so-called passion which is but half-sincere or wholly insincere sentimentalism, if it be not thinly disguised prurient lust, and in so-called pathos which is maudlin to nauseousness. The great unappreciated poet last cited has defined passion as *noble strength on fire*; and this is the true passion of great natures and great poets; while sentimentalism is ignoble weakness dallying with fire; and mere lust, even in novels written by 'ladies' for Society with the capital S, is mere brutishness. Browning's passion is of utter self-sacrifice, self-annihilation, self-vindicated by its irresistible intensity. So we read it in *Time's Revenges*, so in the scornful condemnation of the weak lovers in *The Statue and the Bust*, so in *In a Balcony*, and *Two in the Campagna*, with its

"Infinite passion, and the pain
Of finite hearts that yearn."

Is the love rejected, unreturned? No weak and mean upbraidings of the beloved, no futile complaints; a solemn resignation to immitigable Fate; intense gratitude for inspiring love to the unloving beloved. So in *A Serenade at the Villa*; so in *One Way of Love*, with its

"My whole life long I learned to love,
This hour my utmost art I prove
And speak my passion.—Heaven or Hell?
She will not give me Heaven? 'Tis well!
Lose who may—I still can say,
Those who win Heaven, blest are they!"

So in *The Last Ride Together*, with its

"I said—Then, dearest, since 'tis so,
Since now at length my fate I know,
Since nothing all my love avails,
Since all my life seemed meant for fails,
Since this was written and needs must be—
My whole heart rises up to bless
Your name in pride and thankfulness!
Take back the hope you gave,—I claim
Only a memory of the same."

With a masculine soul for passion, a masculine intellect for thought, and a masculine genius for imagination, all on a vast scale, and all fused together in one intense fire when the theme is great and imperious, we have the highest results of which poetry is capable; and such results I recognize in the noblest poems and passages of Browning as authentic and impressive as in the noblest in our literature; supreme by magnificence of scope in his supreme work *The Ring and the Book*, but stamped with the same sterling mint-mark in many of the shorter pieces in addition to those already cited; and expressed in his own person in that surpassing *One Word More* to E. B. B. alive, which summed up the *Men and Women*, and the fervent invocations to E. B. B. dead, which open and close *The Ring and the Book*. Never surely nobler love through life and death than that which inspired these in the man, and the *Sonnets from the Portuguese* in the woman.

6. *Vitality.* Browning's immense range and depth of sympathy or geniality, which has been rightly considered as of the essence of great genius, is naturally united if not identical with an intense and exuberant vitality, that "manly relish of life" which Lamb so well notes in Fielding; and this is all the more remarkable in these days, when so much of our poetic literature, whether in verse or prose, is, like Hamlet, "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," or altogether divorced and alien from the real living world. It does not come home to men's business and bosoms, so its cultivators and students are but a very

small class apart, and, it must be admitted, not generally of robust natures. For myself, I have frequently been constrained to reflect, How small and weak are the singing birds! Browning, on the contrary, is one of the most robust of natures; nothing alive, or that has lived, is indifferent to him; there is no problem of life or death with which he fears to grapple; he has vital affinities with all things; and his genius appears but to grow in geniality, in hearty and manly relish of life, as he grows in age. He has, indeed, accumulated such inexhaustible stores of knowledge and thought that he seems of late years more and more hurrying to disburthen himself ere the inevitable end shall arrive. For his indestructible vital interest in the living world and hearty relish of life, take *At the Mermaid* in the Pacchiarotto volume of 1876 (a volume I refer to specially because in it he speaks more in his own person than he permitted himself to do in any preceding book):—

“Have you found your life distasteful?
My life did and does smack sweet.
Was your youth of pleasure wasteful?
Mine I saved, and hold complete.
Do your joys with age diminish?
When mine fail me, I'll complain.
Must in death your daylight finish?
My sun sets to rise again.

“I find earth not gray but rosy,
Heaven not grim but fair of hue.
Do I stoop? I pluck a posy.
Do I stand and stare? All's blue.”

And more recently still in *The Two Poets of Croisic*, 1878:—

“Dear, shall I tell you? There's a simple test
Would serve when people take on them to weigh
The worth of poets, ‘Who was better, best,
This, that, the other bard?’ (bards none gainsay
As good, observe! no matter for the rest)
‘What quality preponderating may
Turn the scale as it trembles?’ End the strife
By asking ‘Which one led a happy life?’

“If one did, over his antagonist
That yelled or shrieked or sobbed or wept or wailed
Or simply had the dumps,—dispute who list,—
I count him victor.”

A test fatal to the supremacy of not a few of the very greatest, as Jesus, Dante, Shakspeare, Pascal, Burns, Shelley, Keats, Leopardi; but which certainly reveals the nature of the poet who chooses it.

7. *Christianity*. Finally, I must not fail to note, as one of the most remarkable characteristics of his genius, his profound, passionate, living, triumphant faith in Christ, and in the immortality and ultimate redemption of every human soul in and through Christ. For the last

point I need but cite *Apparent Failure*, where, referring to the three suicides whose corpses he once gazed upon in the Paris Morgue, he declares,

"I thought, and think, their sin's atoned."

and concludes,

"My own hope is, a sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
That, after Last, returns the First,
Though a wide compass round be fetched;
That what began best, can't end worst,
Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst."

Thoroughly familiar with all modern doubts and disbeliefs, he tramples them all underfoot, clinging to the Cross; and this with the full co-operation of his fearless reason, not in spite of it and by its absolute surrender or suppression. A most interesting and valuable essay might be written by an impartial and competent student on the problem, How can Browning be a Christian? but this is scarcely the place for such a discussion. I am not here to argue matters of religion; I am simply taking account of an indubitable and in the highest degree noteworthy fact. It may be objected that if the processes by which he attains and justifies his belief are essential to the belief, there can be but very few real Christian believers, since scarcely one man in ten thousand could master these processes, much less originate them; but the objection would equally apply in the case of any profound and subtle thinker and his doctrines in any department of thought. For us ordinary men the cardinal fact is, that such and such a theory or doctrine was found probable, tenable, reasonable, or irresistible by such and such a profound and subtle and dauntless and sincere thinker. The wise and the simple, nay, the various wise and the various simple, never tread the same path to the same goal; but for common purposes we must class together all those who *do* reach the same goal; and each goal, be it Christianity, or Copernicanism, or Comtism, is entitled to respect in proportion to the aggregate worth (not number) of those who have reached and rested in it.

In Browning we find reverence and audacity co-equal and co-efficient; and doubtless many timid Christians have been shocked by his free handling of their religion in the *Christmas-Eve* and the *Easter-Day*; but candid Non-Christians (among whom I am fain to be classed) cannot but recognize and esteem the fearless and fervent Christianity of those poems, cannot but thoroughly admit the great poet's burning sincerity when he cries at the close of the former—

"I have done: and if any blames me,
Thinking that merely to touch in brevity
The topics I dwell on were unlawful,—
Or worse, that I trench, with undue levity,
On the bounds of the holy and the awful,—

I praise the heart, and pity the head of him,
 And refer myself to THEE, instead of him,
 Who head and heart alike discernest,
 Looking below light speech we utter,
 When frothy spume and frequent sputter
 Prove that the soul's depths boil in earnest !
 May truth shine out, stand ever before us !"

There is indeed one remarkable passage in one of his latest works, *La Saisiaz* (1878), wherein he plunges into the unfathomable abyss of the Everlasting No; but from this he retrieves himself with triumphant emphasis in the Everlasting Yes. For the rest, the devout and hopeful Christian faith explicitly or implicitly affirmed in such poems as *Saul*, *Karshish*, *Cleon*, *Caliban upon Setebos*, *A Death in the Desert*, *Instans Tyrannus*, *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, *Prospice*, the *Epilogue*, and throughout that stupendous monumental work *The Ring and the Book*, must surely be clear as noonday to even the most purblind vision.

To summarize: I look up to Browning as one of the very few men known to me by their works who, with most cordial energy and invincible resolution, have lived thoroughly throughout the whole of their being, to the uttermost verge of all their capacities, in his case truly colossal; lived and wrought thoroughly in sense and soul and intellect; lived at home in all realms of nature and human nature, art and literature: whereas nearly all of us are really alive in but a small portion of our so much smaller beings, and drag wearily toward the grave our for-the-most-part dead selves, dead from the suicidal poison of misuse and atrophy of disuse. Confident and rejoicing in the storm and stress of the struggle, he has conquered life instead of being conquered by it; a victory so rare as to be almost unique, especially among poets in these latter days. When the end comes which must come, he can well say with his friend Landor, that "indomitable old Roman":

"I strove with none, for none was worth my strife;
 Nature I loved, and next to Nature, Art:
 I warmed both hands before the fire of Life;
 It fails, and I am ready to depart!"

And further, in the consummation of the faith of a lifetime, sing to the world: "Must in death your daylight finish?

My sun sets to rise again."

And to his Beloved gone before:

"O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
 And with God be the rest!"

X.

THE MOORISH FRONT TO THE DUOMO IN
 "LURIA."

Braccio. (*Looks to the wall of the tent.*) Did he draw that?

Secretary. With charcoal, when the watch
 Made the report at midnight; Lady Domizia
 Spoke of the unfinished Duomo, you remember:
 That is his fancy how a Moorish front
 Might join to, and complete, the body—a sketch.

Luria, Act I, lines 121-6.

Braccio. I see— 131

A Moorish front, nor of such ill design! 132

In this fine parallel between the people of Florence led in the field by Luria, and the unfinished Cathedral—the pride of the people, 'joined to' a 'Moorish front', the key-note of the play is struck.

The reader who does not know Florence, who has not indeed some knowledge of architecture, will hardly perceive how apt is the parallel: he will not realize how fine an instance it affords of Browning's searching intelligence in every matter of art.

At Florence, in the small and hardly-visited Museum called 'Opera del Duomo', one may see models and plans relating to the Cathedral of all dates, from the time of Arnolfo (its original designer) until now. The building, it is well known, has remained unfinished. The façade now in course of erection was only commenced in 1875. For more than 500 years the art-loving Florentines impatiently expected its completion, and Florentine artists throughout that time have had it for their highest hope to be found worthy of the work. And, curiously enough, there is, amongst many designs in the Museum which bear witness to this honourable ambition and diligent effort, one¹ which accords with our poet's thought—

"—a fancy, how a *Moorish front*
 Might join to, and complete, the body."

¹ The description of this plan is as follows: "Progetto per la facciata della Metropolitana di Firenze composto e disegnato nel 1822 dall'Architetto Giovanni Silvestri ed inviato alla T. R. Accademia delle belle Arti.—Giovanni Silvestri e Felice Francolini Architetti dedicano ai loro concittadini. 1833."

It is a design which dwells in the memory. It is imaginative, and more poetical perhaps in conception than any of those which a stricter taste prefers. It is not quite compatible, yet it is not wholly incongruous. The influence of the East was strong upon Arnolfo when, in the late 13th century, he made his plan. His work stands quoted, indeed, as a great example of Italian Gothic, and few would understand, until thus shown, how easily it might be Orientalized. The architect has realized also an idea of Browning's (see 'Old Pictures in Florence'), that the spire which formed part of its original design should be added to the Campanile of Giotto. The Campanile is detached, but its west side is flush with the façade, and practically, where alterations are in question, it must be considered as part of the Cathedral.

The tower with the short spire added, small pinnacles or minarets on the shoulders of the façade, and the great dome with its sub-domes in the rear, have an effect almost wholly Eastern.

Few, I have said, would realize that the work might so be treated, yet one architect at least has done so, and Browning (now an artist, now a musician, now again an architect, and always a poet) has realized it too. For it is an interesting fact that Browning has not seen the design I have just described, which embodies so precisely the ideas expressed in his verse.

If I should ever be called upon to say 'why I like Mr. Browning,' I should reply perhaps, first of all, because of his power of divining and revealing the deep secrets of art. The object of my note will be accomplished if it causes others to feel with me, in yet one instance more, this great and beneficent power.

Not quite compatible, nor yet wholly incongruous, we have seen, was the façade proposed—

"A Moorish front, *nor of such ill design*,"

says the poet. And not wholly incongruous either was this idea of a Moorish leader for the Florentines. A foreigner he was, no doubt, and much to be said against him; still in the genius of Florence there was *something* not utterly repugnant to a stranger's yoke. In the lines of their *Duomo* too was there not this same thing (an artist had said it once), which told them that they might choose as well perhaps a Moorish façade as any of a hundred of native design?

ERNEST RADFORD.

XI.

THE ORIGINAL OF "NED BRATTS:."

DRAMATIC IDYLS (SERIES I), 1879, p. 109-143.

"The | Life and Death | of | Mr. *Badman*, | Presented | To the World
in a | familiar | Dialogue | Between | Mr. *Wiseman*, | And | Mr.
Attentive. | By *John Bunyan*, | the Author of the *Pilgrims*
Progress. | London, | Printed by J. A. for Nath. Ponder at | the
Peacock in the Poultry, near | the Church. 1680. p. 23 (p. 34,
Paisley, 1866).¹

The Story of
old *Tod*. *Wife[man]*. Since you are entred upon Storyes, I
also will tell you one, the which, though I heard it not
with mine own Ears, yet my author I dare believe. *It
is concerning one old *Tod*, that was hanged about Twenty
years agoe, or more, at *Hartford*, for being a Thief. The Story is this:

"At a Summer Affizes holden at *Hartford*, while the Judge was
fitting upon the Bench, comes this old *Tod* into the Court, clothed in
a green Suit, with his Leathern Girdle in his hand, his bosom open, and
all on a dung sweate, as if he had run for his Life; and being come in,
he spake aloud as follows: *My Lord*, said he, *Here is the*
veryest Rogue that breaths upon the face of the earth. I
have been a Thief from a Child: When I was but a little
one, I gave my self to rob Orchards, and to do other such like wicked
things, and I have continued a Thief ever since. My Lord, there has not
been a Robbery committed thus² many years, within so many miles of
this place, but I have either been at it, or privy to it.

¹ Bunyan states the purpose of the book in "The Author to the Reader.—
Courteous Reader, As I was considering with my self what I had written concern-
ing the *Progress* of the *Pilgrim* from this World to Glory; and how it had been
acceptable to many in this Nation: It came again into my mind to write, as
then, of him that was going to Heaven, so now, of the Life and Death of the
Ungodly, and of their travel from this world to *Hell*. The which in this I have
done, and have put it, as thou seest, under the Name and Title of Mr. *Badman*, a
Name very proper for such a Subject: I have also put it into the form of a
Dialogue, that I might with more ease to my self, and pleasure to the Reader,
perform the work."—F.

² *Orig.* thus: 3rd ed. 1696, this.

"The Judge thought the fellow was mad, but after some conference with some of the Justices, they agreed to Indict him; and so they did, of several felonious Actions; to all which he heartily confessed Guilty, and so was hanged with his wife at the same time."

"*Atten[tive]*. This is a remarkable story indeed, and you think it is a true one.

"*Wife*. It is not only remarkable, but pat to our purpose. This Thief, like Mr. *Badman*, began his Trade betimes; he began too where Mr. *Badman* began, even at robbing of Orchards, and other such things, which brought him, as you may perceive, from sin to sin, till at last it brought him to the publick shame of sin, which is the Gallows.

"As for the truth of this Story, the Relator told me that he was at the same time himself in the Court, and stood within less than two yards of old *Tod*, when he heard him aloud to utter the words."

The above¹, as 'Mr. Wiseman' has it, is "not only remarkable, but pat to our purpose."

See also *Froude's* little book on *Bunyan* ("English Men of Letters" Series, 1880), p. 5.

"These stories and these experiences were Bunyan's *early* mental food. One of them which had deeply impressed the imagination of the Midland counties, was the Story of 'Old Tod.'"

Browning must have invented the idea that Old Tod's (*i. e.* Ned Bratts's) conversion was due to *Bunyan's* writings.

ERNEST W. RADFORD.

The story of 'Old Tod', which he had read in his boyhood, was distinctly in Browning's mind when he wrote *Ned Bratts* at the Splügen, far from books. *Ivàn Ivànovitch* was written at the same place and altitude.—F.

¹ I have altered the 1866 text to that of the 1st edn., 1680.—F.

XII.

AN ANALYSIS AND SUMMARY OF

FIFINE AT THE FAIR.

BY THE REV. JOHN SHARPE, M.A.

Part I. The Problem stated. § 1—18.

- § 1—6. The fair.
- § 7—12. Gipsy happiness and virtue different from ours.
- § 13. The problem : why so?
- § 14—18. Fifine, a subject for scientific study.

Part II. The method of love. § 19—59.

(a) *Elvire supreme in beauty.* § 19—42.

- § 19—21. Procession of beauties.
- § 22, 23. Elvire surpasses all.
- § 24—28. The interest of Fifine : bodies show minds.
- § 29. All is good.
- § 30—33. Special merit of Fifine.
- § 34—37. Elvire a *Rafael* : Fifine a *Doré*.
- § 38, 39. Ideal description of Elvire.
- § 40—42. Seen by soul as in Art, where sense sees only material cause and effect.

(β) *The secret of love.* § 43—49.

- § 43. Body reveals dim traces of soul,
- § 44. Whence soul reconstructs the ideal.
- § 45—49. As the motive is discerned in the rough sketch,
- § 50, 51. So love discerns the ideal :
- § 52. So I discerned Eidothée,
- § 53. And Elvire.
- § 54, 55. The ideal is a lasting gain.
- § 56, 57. The Master is vindicated,
- § 58, 59. And truth attained by communication of gains.

Part III. The method of philosophy. § 60—88.

§ 60—63. The problem restated, how to rise out of the false into the true.

§ 64—68. Floating symbolizes the method; immersed in falsehood, a soul can breathe the true.

§ 69—80. Woman helps us here more than man.

i. he is selfish, § 71, 72.

she self-sacrificing, § 73.

ii. man envies superiority, § 75.

woman admires, § 76—78.

iii. man shows himself in hate, § 79.

woman in love, which proves to me, I am. § 80.

§ 81—83. *Fifine* helps more than *Elvire*, for difficulty stimulates effort.

§ 84—88. The gypsy actors avow a false outside; let me seek the true: and from the least spark of truth let soul recreate the ideal.

Part IV. The Dream. § 89—125.

§ 89—93. Introduction; music expresses feeling.

§ 94—104. The Carnival at Venice.

i. viewed by pride, all is ugly, § 94—98.

ii. viewed by sympathy, good is discerned, § 99—104.

§ 105—108. Its lesson universally true.

§ 109. Welcome what is.

§ 110—125. Proof of universality.

i. All is change, § 110—117.

In religion, learning, philosophy, § 110—112.

Yet Truth does its work by maintaining faith in Truth, § 113, 114.

In history, morals, art, music, poetry, change is still more rapid, § 115—117.

ii. All is Permanent, § 118—123.

Partial truths will blend in one, § 118—120.

Not in a learned theory, but the intuitive truth of unsophisticated man, § 121—123.

iii. Under the Changing, seek the Permanent: let soul look up, not down; not hate, but love, § 124.

So through *Fifine* I reach the ultimate, § 125.

Part V. The End. The Fall.

§ 126, 127. We end where we began, in instinctive truths.

§ 128. A humiliating fact, therefore no self-deception.

§ 129. Such also is the duty of conjugal fidelity: from the wife evolve Woman.

§ 130. Am I parted from Elvire?

§ 131. Never more will I speculate.

§ 132. The temptation and fall.

The key to *Fifine* is supplied by the passage of Molière, prefixed to the poem. Molière's Elvire says to her husband, whom she suspects of an intrigue, "Why do you not say to me all that a husband ought to say to his wife?" Browning's Don Juan, accordingly, does say all that a man ought to say to his wife, whilst secretly intriguing with *Fifine*. He puts forward a philosophy partly true, partly sophistical. His avowed object is to study *Fifine* scientifically, and so to test the truth of a philosophy which deals with the mystery of imperfection and evil in a world of God's creation (§ 13, 29, 43, 67, 86, 101, 108).

From the analysis of true love, he evolves a theory applicable to the universe and its development. Outwardly a wife may be faded, and her character imperfect (§ 33, 40): in the eyes of love she is faultless and supremely beautiful (§ 38, 39). For under the imperfect exterior, the soul seeking its complementary soul, discerns traces of beauty from which it reconstructs the whole (§ 44, 50). This ideal soul is the object of love.

This method should be applied to all the rest of God's creation. If we regard all mankind with the eyes of love, we shall find beneath moral and physical deformity, traces of goodness and beauty: from which we can reconstruct each soul as God designed it, fair and pure (§ 52—58).

So in all things, beneath the false we may discern the true: beneath the changing we may seize the permanent. We cannot soar into absolute truth, but as we float in the sea of speculation we can breathe the pure air of truth sufficiently to keep the soul alive.

I desire, therefore, says Don Juan, to study *Fifine*: bodies show minds, she has a beautiful body, and therefore beneath it a beautiful mind (§ 28): she is an actress, therefore her true self is far removed from the immodesty which she displays on the surface (§ 84): *Fifine* regarded with sympathy and viewed in the true light, will reveal to me her real soul as God designed it.

Elvire is not persuaded by her husband's argument, and leaves him when he receives a note from *Fifine*. After death she returns to fetch his penitent soul from its house "embrowned with sin and shame."

Don Juan knows the good, and deliberately does the evil. Thus Pornic affords another instance of the action of that infection of nature which theologians call 'Original Sin' (see '*Gold Hair* a story of Pornic'). The mystery of evil remains unsolved.

Bibliography, p. 45, 169. (16) *In a Gondola*, l. 192. "Castelfranco" is of course Giorgione: Giorgio Barbarelli, "born in the year 1478, at Castelfranco, in the territory of Treviso, and . . . at a later period called Giorgione [big George], as well from the character of his person as for the exaltation of his mind." He died in his 34th year, 1511, from the plague, caught from the lady he was in love with. He was a fellow-student with Titian under the Bellini. *Vasari* englisht, ed. Bohn, ii. 394-402.

Bibliography, p. 149, l. 9, for "another" read "author." p. 152, l. 2 from foot, for "her father's" read "his (that is, Browning's) father's."

In *Household Words*, vol. iv, p. 213, no. 87, Nov. 22, 1851, there is a sonnet addressed to Browning.—W. G. Stone.

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1882, J. T. Nettleship, *Always on Browning*, p. 11.

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- The Society's Meetings and Papers, Session I., 1881-2, are, at 8 p.m., on Friday,
- Oct. 28, 1881. On the "Characteristics of Browning's Philosophy and Poetry," by the Rev. J. KIRKMAN, M.A. (*The Inaugural Lecture.*)
- Nov. 25, 1881. (1) Robert Browning, his Genius and Works, by G. BARNETT SMITH, Esq.
(2) On "Pietro of Alano" and the Leading Idea of *Dramatic Idylls*, Series II., by the Rev. J. SHARPE, M.A.
- Jan. 27, 1882. (1) Some Thoughts on Browning, by MISS MARY A. LEWIS.
(2) Notes on the Genius of Robert Browning, by JAMES THOMSON, Esq.
- Feb. 24, 1882. On *Fifine at the Fair*, by J. T. NETTLESHIP, Esq.
- March 24, 1882. On "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower came," by the Rev. J. KIRKMAN, M.A.
- April 28, 1882. On Browning's Philosophy, by JOHN B. BURY, Esq., Trin. Coll., Dublin.
- May 26, 1882. (1) On *By, Biogram*, by the Rev. Prof. E. JOHNSON.
(2) Browning and the Arts, by W. SHARP, M.A.
- June 23, 1882. On Browning's Method of Revealing the Soul to itself by means of a startling Experience, by Prof. HIRAM CONSON, LL.D.

On July 7, 1882, A Special Meeting, of Members only, will be held, to settle the Constitution of the Society, and elect its Officers for the ensuing year.

62 The Meetings of the First Session, with the exception of that on July 7, are open to the Public.

Stanford MAR 16 1903

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1881-4.

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XIII.

BROWNING'S PHILOSOPHY.

BY JOHN BURY, TRIN. COLL., DUBLIN.

(Read at the 6th Meeting of the Browning Society, Friday, April 28, 1882.)

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| <p><i>Introduction</i>, p. 259.</p> <p>I. <i>Br.'s point of view: individual</i>, p. 261.</p> <p>II. <i>Br.'s First Principle, or God</i>, p. 262.</p> <p>III. <i>How Love manifests itself in the world: Power and Knowledge</i>, p. 263.</p> <p>IV. <i>The implication of opposites:</i></p> | <p><i>necessity of Falschood and Evil</i>, p. 266.</p> <p>V. <i>Love and Knowledge complementary</i>, p. 268.</p> <p>VI. <i>Comparisons with Hegel</i>, p. 270.</p> <p>VII. <i>Personal God: Christianity, Individuals</i>, p. 272.</p> <p>VIII. <i>Immortality</i>, p. 275.</p> |
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I START with the distinction which Browning has himself drawn in his Essay on Shelley between the objective and the subjective poet. The former is he who is impelled to embody his perceptions with reference to the many below; the latter to embody them with reference to the One above him, "the supreme Intelligence which apprehends all things in their absolute truth,—an ultimate view ever aspired to, if but partially attained, by the poet's own soul. Not what man sees, but what God sees—the Ideas of Plato, seeds of creation lying burningly on the Divine Hand—it is towards these that he struggles."

We are tempted to ask, Is Browning himself an objective or a subjective poet? The dramatic form of such a large majority of his works might induce some on superficial consideration to decide that he belongs to the former class. But lovers of Browning who go beyond the external form will recognize, along with his objectivity, that power "to lift his fellows, with their half-apprehensions, up to his own sphere, by intensifying the import of details and rounding the universal meaning," which marks the subjective poet. Whilst he supplies us with "the fresh and living swathe," whilst he represents to us separately and analytically the facts of experience, he is not carelessly content to be ignorant of laws for recombining them, but seeks to bring them under a universal and harmonizing synthesis. In this view then he is at once a subjective and objective poet; he has in fact transcended the one-sided standpoints of both classes, and if he does not succeed in striking the highest notes of the greatest singers of either, yet he has attained to a

fuller and more steadfast view of the universe and its problems, because on the one side his objective faculty both moderates the extravagance of spiritual intuition and gives it solid as well as airy material for its use, and on the other side his subjective faculty supplies wings to soar above the immediate world of experience and demonstrate its affinity to something higher. And this is just the poet that men seemed to be in need of. Considering that the poet's function is to find and show us Truth, the objective poet tries to fulfil this function by presenting to us in poetical dress nature and life as they immediately seem to be; the subjective poet by transcendent acts of insight apprehends transcendent Truth, he rises as on the waves of Abt Vogler's music to heights which many indeed of his hearers, borne along with him, may catch sight of for a moment, but when they sink again to the common chord, and are bereft of his assistance, they are liable to apprehensions that the vision may have been an illusive dream. We want then a poet who will use understanding as well as insight, and instead of taking a giant leap—a leap which few can follow—from the objectivity of experience to an absolute Truth like Plato's Ideas, will condescend to help those Jacobs not endowed with his own wings of spiritual intuition up the several steps of a ladder. This is what Browning does; he supplies mediating links between experience and the absolute Truth. It is this discursive reasoning element in Browning which makes us associate philosophy with him more than with most poets, for they are content to see; he seeks to explain.

The aim of this paper is to give in a connected form the general bearings of his philosophical teaching. In the belief that the thoughts of a philosopher often illustrate, and so help us to pierce more clearly, the perceptions of a poet, I had intended to draw some parallels as I went along between Browning and Hegel. But when I came to write, I found that the compass of a single essay would not admit of it, and so I shall merely indicate some general points of comparison with Hegel, after I have first exhibited Browning's doctrines.

But, to begin, I must insist on the *necessity* of clearly comprehending Browning's *theory*, in order to understand what are the practical conclusions which he draws: especially, does he believe in immortality of the individual. And supposing such immortality to be the high hope upon which he has fixed his eyes, and at the same time the corner-stone on which he has raised the towers of philosophical optimism over the turf of doubt, yet inasmuch as doubt is our lot as the sparks fly upward, inasmuch as we are still of the turf turfy, we are forced to pause and consider whether this corner-stone is firm and deeply *enough sunk* to bear up the edifice, or whether it is but a turf-clod which,

chancing to be a little concreter and denser, has presented the illusive appearance of rock. When we have redescended the turrets that we have mounted under Browning's guidance, and "stand on alien ground"; when we sink to the common chord of this life—sorrow that is hard to bear, and doubt that is slow to cure—we cannot but question the objective permanence of the heights that we "rolled from into the deep"; we feel sober acquiescence very difficult; it is hard to find our resting-place. Is the poet in possession of a point or peak that can fix the wandering star of immortality? has he found a real spark on earth that reflects the ideal "ball of blaze" in heaven? Or, dropping metaphor, has he established a tenable basis for this great hope, if indeed he holds it, without any aid from that unfortunate dogmatism which is so often made to serve for reasoned truth?

Such questions as these will seem of course irrelevant to orthodox Christians, but it is not for "maw-crammed," "crop-full" Christians, who never feel doubt, that Browning writes; it is for men and women, whom indeed he endeavours to make Christian in the widest sense of the word, but not by forcing dogma down their throats by

<p>"method abundantly convincing, As I say, to those convinced before,</p>	<p>But scarce to be swallowed without By the not-as-yet-convinced." [wincing</p>
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Let us try then to see Browning's "scheme of the weal and woe," that we may, if we can, understand the hope of Caponsacchi, and see the possibility of "worlds not a few" wherein our hopes shall be realized, and their impersonations, our Evelyn Hopes, be revived for us.

I. BROWNING'S POINT OF VIEW: INDIVIDUAL.

Philosophers, strictly so called, set themselves the problem of explaining the universe, the spheres of Abstract Thought, of Nature, and of Spirit, whose inner bond they try to discover; and this bond constitutes the metaphysics of their system. But history tells us that every system that has yet been elaborated has, in a generation or two, when weighed in the balance, been found wanting, and been superseded by a new system which its author in turn fancied was the "key to all the knowledges"; but soon gates were found with locks of too complicated wards for it, and a new key must be forged. This is the natural consequence of the growth and progress of the human spirit, its increase of knowledge and civilization; and new philosophical schemes must arise till the end of things. But great world-schemes are universal, not individual, and philosophers like Epictetus or Epicurus speak to individuals more than Plato or Aristotle. Individuals, though they may grasp a system with eagerness, as giving them a wide and satisfactory view of the mysteries of mind and nature, must go back into the individual

again and ask, What is the meaning of this *for me*? And this question the universal systems do not solve; and when they try, cannot solve quite adequately or self-consistently: this is a question on which poets give us deeper hintings, on which music gives us momentary revelations.

It were possible to class human souls in genera and species, classes and varieties, yet none the less each individual soul is individual, and life has a different meaning for each. No spiritual kernel can get free of the nut-shell it is bounded in, though it count itself a king of infinite space. The coefficients of refraction vary with the media: the "natural fog" of a good pastor's mind augments his truths to double their size, and the pearl of price lies on a professor's table "dust and ashes levigable." It is from the individual that Browning starts:

"Meantime I can but testify
God's care for me—no more, can I—
It is but for myself I know;

The world rolls witnessing around me
Only to leave me as it found me."
(*Chr. Ecc.*)

As Mr. Arnold expresses it,

"Thou hast been, shalt be, art alone." (*Switzerland.*)

The human world is a collection of units, each by himself and for himself; and, because they coexist, *externally* dependent on one another: it is like a sea studded with "pin-point rocks." Each man's mind is like a

"convex glass
Wherein are gathered all the scattered
points
Picked out of the immensity of sky,

To reunite there, be our heaven on
earth,
Our known unknown, our God revealed
to man." (*Ring and Book*, iv, 57.)

But there are two sides to an individual's *Weltanschauung*, the individual and the universal. From the individual side he considers the universe as his own world; from the universal he looks upon himself as a single unit of that world. Now it is the individual side that comes prominently forward in Browning; but to understand it we must take it in its context; and as the universal side, being less obtrusive, is very likely to escape notice, I shall occupy myself first and principally with it, and afterwards take it in connection with the individual side.

II. BROWNING'S FIRST PRINCIPLE, OR GOD.

Browning's first principle or absolute Truth is Love: that which abideth one and the same, the subject and substance of all change, the permanence by which alone change is possible, whose sum ever "remains what it was before," in short, God or Truth; for, as he tells us in *Fifine*, "falsehood is change," and "truth is permanence." In the whole realm of thought, including the laws of nature and the course of history, and especially the lots of souls, Browning has essayed to pierce through the *phenomenal* exterior, and the abiding reality that he reaches and brings *back tidings of* is Love: Love is the Truth.

It is naturally asked, How does Browning arrive at this first concrete principle? how does he support the claims of Love as that in terms of which the universe is to be ultimately explained? The answer is, he derives it from experience. His poems are dramatic pictures of life drawn in such a way as to let us detect Love as the permanent spiritual unity underlying the manifold changing variety of circumstances, which are merely the modes in which Love's power compels it to reveal itself. Hence most of his works have two sides: (1) they contribute severally to establish the great tenet of his teaching, that Love is God; (2) they at the same time exhibit conclusions deducible from this hypothesis; and thus (3) the doctrine itself may be looked upon as the pervading and unifying fluid, which gives to all his poems, as a whole, an organic life.

It is, perhaps, scarce necessary to remark that this procedure of Browning is most strictly philosophical. Such an objection as that he himself imports Love into the circumstances would tell as much or as little against all science. Theory is as necessary to interpret facts as facts are to support theory.

III. HOW LOVE MANIFESTS ITSELF IN THE WORLD: POWER AND KNOWLEDGE.

Love is a mere verbal abstraction unless it be conscious of itself; and in order to be conscious of itself, it must reveal itself to itself. Its very nature and essence is to manifest itself; until it do so, it is only a potential idea, not an actual reality. The conditions of its revelation, Browning shows us, are given by its two modes, *Power* and *Knowledge* (or *Intellect*). Power is the mode of Love's manifestation in Nature; Knowledge is Love's recognition of itself through the medium of Power. But it is better to quote some of Browning's own expositions of these principles from the individual point of view.

"Man, therefore, stands on his own stock

Of love and power as a pin-point rock,
And, looking to God who ordained divorce

[tinent,
Of the rock from his boundless con-
Sees, in his power made evident,
Only excess by a million-fold
O'er the power God gave man in the mould.

For, note: man's hand first formed
to carry

A few pounds' weight, when taught
to marry

Its strength with an engine's, lifts a
mountain,

—Advancing in power by one degree;
And why count steps through eternity?
But love is the ever-springing fountain:
Man may enlarge or narrow his bed
For the waters play, but the water-
head—

How can he multiply or reduce it?
As easy create it, as cause it to cease;
He may profit by it, or abuse it,
But 'tis not a thing to bear increase
As power does: be love less or more
In the heart of man, he keeps it shut
Or opes it wide, as he pleases, but
Love's sum remains what it was before."

(*Chr. Ecc.*)

Here is shown the function of Power : to it are due all apparent changes and quantitative variations of Love. Though Knowledge is not in these lines expressly mentioned, yet it is implied in man, who recognizes Love and Power. Love being the substance, and therefore also the end and purpose of life, Knowledge is the means whereby it perfects and fulfils itself—

“ why live

Except for love—how love unless they know ? ” (*R. & B., Pope.*)

Truth and Beauty are merely Love revealed as an object to man's Knowledge :

“ all thou dost enumerate
Of power and beauty in the world,
The mightiness of love was curled

Inextricably round about.
Love lay within it and without
To clasp thee.” (*Easter Day.*)

Again,

“ the truth in God's breast

Lies trace for trace upon ours impressed,” &c. (*Chr. Eve.*)

But the fault in men is not to recognize that beauty and truth are manifestations of Love. When Fra Lippo Lippi says—

“ Or say there's beauty with no soul at all—

(I never saw it—put the case the same—)

If you get simple beauty and nought else,

You get about the best thing God invents :

That's somewhat : and you'll find the soul you have missed,

Within yourself, when you return him thanks ”—

he means that beauty is always an apparition of Love ; for the *soul* is the faculty of Love, as distinguished from *mind* the faculty of Knowledge, and from Power. And if any one, though loving the beauty, fail consciously to detect a latent soul, yet the effect it works on his own soul proves the secret presence of Love.

When Love is once free and flowing, having set itself free by means of Power, it manifests itself in advancing stages from “ the extreme of the minute ” up to the mind of man “ recognized at the height ”—progressive forms of Beauty. I can only refer—the passage is far too long to quote—to the last speech of Paracelsus, which describes in marvellously vivid poetry the evolution of God, through the stages of nature and spirit. I entreat especial attention to this passage.

As power is thus the vesture, “ the suits and trappings ” of Love, it follows that Browning considers the natural world—space, our surroundings, our bodies, “ this dance of plastic circumstance ”—to possess its significance as the sphere wherein Love shows itself and learns to know itself, and which belongs most of all to man, who is the clearest “ facet of reflection of God ” ; it is the stage on which he is to “ love in turn and be beloved,” and be initiated in Godship ; it is “ machinery just meant to give thy soul its bent.”

<p>"Man appears at last. So far the seal Is put on life; one stage of being complete, One scheme wound up: and from the grand result A supplementary reflux of light Illustrates all the inferior grades, explains Each back step in the circle. Not alone</p>	<p>For their possessor dawn those qualities, But the new glory mixes with the heaven And earth; man, once descried, imprints for ever His presence on all lifeless things: the winds Are henceforth voices, wailing or a shout, A querulous mutter or a quick gay laugh; Never a senseless gust, now man is born," &c. (<i>Paracelsus</i>.)</p>
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The lower forms of creation are perfect each in its place, each has its "due facet of reflection" too, each is a mode of the life that God made be, but their very perfection is due to their inferiority in the scale. It is as if we conceive nature developing from an atom-point of force, like a spiral cone which winds round and round in ever-widening circles; but all except the last are shut in, fixed and confined in their positions; the last alone has an end-point and room for further progress: man is

<p>"Lower than God who knows all and can all, Higher than beasts which know and can so far As each beast's limit, perfect to an end, Nor conscious that they know, nor craving more; While man knows partly, but con- ceives beside,</p>	<p>Creeps ever on from fancies to the fact, And in this striving, this converting air Into a solid he may grasp and use, <u>Finds progress, man's distinctive mark</u> <u>alone,</u> Not God's, and not the beasts': God is, they are, Man partly is, and wholly hopes to be." (<i>Death in the Desert</i>.)</p>
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This distinction is one of the striking features of Browning's teaching: man's perfection consists in his imperfection, and his consciousness thereof. He is not like a

"lark emballed by its own crystal song,
Or rose enmisted by that scent it makes!" (*Ar. Pol.*)

These, indeed, God hath pronounced to be very good; they are good in their degree; but there are degrees higher; and the use of the lower degrees is, that they are modes of Love for man's love to recognize. Man realizes Love by knowledge; by knowledge, for example, of what "love can do in the leaf and stone." But the essence of his manhood is "the passion that leaves the ground to lose itself in the sky." The spark "that disturbs our clod" is the pledge of our divinity. The beasts "partake" and "receive," but think not of the provider and effector: we indeed receive gifts too, we are confined in our cistern, we are finite, we are dust as well as they; but then we can, while they cannot, look from the gift

"to the giver,
And from the cistern to the river,
And from the finite to infinity,
And from man's dust to God's divinity."

And so in Art,

"the incomplete
More than completion matches the immense."

Witness Michael Agnolo, witness Andrea del Sarto. Giotto's Bell-tower's incompletion constitutes its greatness.

As closely connected with this point of view, I pass to what I consider another great feature of Browning's philosophy.

IV. THE IMPLICATION OF OPPOSITES: NECESSITY OF FALSEHOOD AND EVIL.

The Truth of Love, in order to assert itself, requires a medium of negation or falsehood, in contrast with which it may shine out and show itself to be the Truth. If there were not falsehood or show, there would be no means for Truth's revelation. For if Truth existed alone, pure and unclouded, its end is already obtained, and there is no room for process or progress; in fact, there would be no meaning in the term "truth." As Jacob Böhme showed, Yes would have no meaning if there were not the possibility of saying No. Pure truth with no falsehood we could not distinguish from pure falsehood with no truth. Sludge, the Medium, was not altogether wrong when he said,

"Don't let truth's lump rot stagnant for the lack
Of a timely helpful lie to leaven it!"

On the one hand, "everybody can, will, and does cheat;" on the other, "every cheat's inspired, and every lie quick with a germ of truth." And Ogniben said, "There is truth in falsehood, falsehood in truth." To use an illustration that is common to Hegel and Browning, it is as little possible to see in absolute unlimited light as in absolute unlimited darkness; vision is only possible when one is tempered by the other:

"Clouds obscure—
But for which obscurity all were bright?
Too hastily concluded! Sun-suffused,
A cloud may soothe the eye made blind by blaze,—
Better the very clarity of heaven." (*R. & B.*, Pope, p. 71.)

And in *Aristoph. Apol.*, p. 90, we read:

"No sun makes proof of his whole potency,
For gold and purple in that orb we view;
The apparent orb does little but leave blind
The audacious, and confused the worshipping.
But, close on orb's departure, must succeed
The serviceable cloud,—must intervene,
Induce expenditure of rose and blue,
Reveal what lay in him, was lost to us."

Thus we have the *raison d'être* of evil and falsehood and pain; without them, good and truth and pleasure were not possible.

"The evil is null and nought, silence implying sound."

"Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony should be prized?"

Even a heaven cannot be conceived without at least the possibility of pain and ill.

The virtue of a sheathed flower may be drawn forth by a "thunderous midnight." Mistake for man is "midway help till he reach fact indeed," and error is in the world in order that he may look above its scope and "see the love." Care and doubt are symbols and pledges of the love that is his soul, pledges of his alliance with Divinity:

"Irks care the cropful bird? frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?"

"For mankind springs salvation by each hindrance interposed." Hear Paracelsus's regrets—

"In my own heart love had not been made wise
To trace love's faint beginnings in mankind.
To know, even hate is but a mask of love's,
To see a good in evil, and a hope
In ill-success; to sympathize, be proud
Of their half-reasons, faint aspirings, dim
Struggles for truth, their poorest fallacies,
Their prejudice and fears and cares and doubts."

I may quote two out of many pertinent passages in *Sordello* —

"Where the salt marshes stagnate, crystals branch;
Blood dries to crimson; Evil's beautified
In every shape. Thrust Beauty then aside
And banish Evil! Wherefore? After all,
Is Evil a result less natural
Than Good?" (Book 6.)

And—

"Venice seems a type
Of Life—'twixt blue and blue extends, a stripe,
As Life, the somewhat, hangs 'twixt nought and nought:
'Tis Venice and 'tis Life: as good you sought
To spare me the Piazza's slippery stone
Or keep me to the unchoked canals alone,
As hinder Life the evil with the good
Which make up Living, rightly understood." (Book 3.)

I could fill pages more with quotations to the same effect. On the use of doubt does Browning everywhere especially insist (cf. e. g. *Rabbi Ben Ezra*). It is a kind of spiritual purgatorio for souls *di farsi belle*. Even pessimism is not to be condemned without qualification; for it implies a high standard of good in the pessimist.

But it is in *Fiſne* that far the longest and fullest exposition of this principle is to be found. I refer particularly to the simile of the swimmer in the ocean, one of the very greatest of Browning's many great similes.

Here I would make an observation on this poem, which is the subject of so much contention. The view that some hold that the arguments in it are, most of them, sophisms, and some of them truths, seems to me mistaken. The lesson of *Fifine* is really of the same kind, and taught by the same method, as that of *Blougram's Apology*. All that the Bishop so brilliantly urges to show the utility of doubt, in fact its indispensability as a moment in enlightened faith, is *perfectly true*; the falsehood consists in making it a maxim for conduct in a different sense from its theoretical validity. Doubt is valuable, nay, necessary as a MEANS to enlightened faith; and this very statement confutes the Bishop's indifferent life, because he is content to rest in doubt as if it were an *end*. From God's point of view, doubt and evil are good as means to good; but from man's point of view—as practiser, not theorist—doubt and evil in themselves must be always evil, because imperfect. So in *Fifine*: all Don Juan's arguments are theoretical truths propounded clearly and splendidly; we are taught to see that flirtation with a *Fifine* and temporary inconstancy may be productive of good, may be a "midway help" to a deeper-grounded and abiding constancy, an assistance to finding reality in falsehood; for certain natures it may perhaps be the only road to truth and love. But the falsity consists in converting this theoretical optimism into a rule of life to excuse fickle affections. Blougram and Don Juan fall into the same sophism through not recognizing the true relations of theory and practice (cf. Butler, *Analogy*, Pt. I. cap. vii.).

V. LOVE AND KNOWLEDGE COMPLEMENTARY.

Of every real fact of experience Love, Power, and Knowledge are elements (cf. sect. iii, p. 263). Although one may be present in apparently much larger proportion—so large as to monopolize the attention—yet the others too must be there in some measure, for all three are essential elements of reality, and mutually imply one another. (Power, indeed, which is the negative element, need not be specially considered, because either longing love or eager knowledge implies its presence in equal amount.)

This consideration has brought Browning to most important results in psychological analysis. It is the inharmonious blending of these elements that puts souls out of tune. Excess of Love accompanied by defect of Knowledge, and excess of Knowledge accompanied by defect of Love, are equally disastrous. Aprile and Paracelsus failed through holding to these opposite abstractions. Aprile would love infinitely: the failure of his life was due to leaping at the end without recognizing and *employing the* indispensable means; and an end pursued in ignorance

of, and abstraction from, the necessary means, is an imaginary and false end. Paracelsus would know infinitely: the failure in his life consisted in mistaking the means for the end, in assuming knowledge to be the throne, whereas it is but the steps. We call the object of knowledge Truth or Reality; but since the only abiding True and Real behind its show and appearance is Love, Truth and Love are ultimately identical. Men go astray by separating these that are properly inseparable. Blind desire pursues Love as if it were independent of Knowledge, and fails to find it, like Aprile; and Knowledge pursues Truth as if it were independent of Love, and can find no Truth—except the truth of failure—like Paracelsus. It may be observed that these two characters, the Italian and the German, may be looked on as respectively the types of the Romanic and German nations.

With slight variation of the point of view:—Knowledge is Love's recognition of itself; but if the human soul, the individual pin-point of Love, does not recognize Love in its object, but calls it merely truth or fact, then it does not *know* in the highest sense of the word, it has only a half-truth; and half-truths, besides being defective, are false because taken to be whole truths. Perfect love would be also perfect knowledge, and perfect knowledge perfect love. This shows us the meaning of that great line in *Paracelsus*,

"I, you and God, can comprehend each other,"

where "I, you" are Aureole and Aprile, who have learned by failure, and God is the ideal union of the two things which they had witlessly separated; he is the "perfect Poet," for poets are those who knowing love, and loving know, with whom mind and soul are not, as in ordinary men, separated energies, but are a harmonious unity. ✓

But of the two, Love is the prior, the superior: a loving worm were diviner than a loveless god. Goethe cries (in *Werther*), "Was ich weiss, kann jeder wissen—mein Herz habe ich allein." (What I know, can every one know: my Heart is mine alone.)

Let no one say that it must be a poor palette on which there are only three colours; for in different combinations and proportions they produce infinite variety of shades. These three principles—Love, Knowledge, Power—are the fundamental chord of the universe, and Love is the keynote; each of these is "everywhere in the world—loud, soft, and all is said." Man's problem is to harmonize them in his soul, which he can do but incompletely until by the process of evolution he has become, as God, a perfect musician; in the mean time let him seize and hold as earnest of ultimate everlasting music all passing revelations vouchsafed to him—moonbeams made marble. ✓

VI. COMPARISONS WITH HEGEL.

Before proceeding to consider Browning's views on Christianity and Immortality, and the significance of the Universe for the Individual, I stop to draw some comparisons with Hegel. The philosopher finds a first principle and a method of applying it wherewith he interprets the universe; the poet does not set himself directly to interpret the universe, but to interpret human souls; yet inasmuch as they are part and parcel of the whole, and must be studied by the light of the whole in which they are set, their interpretation equally involves a theory of the universe. Of course this is only applicable to poets like Browning, not equally to those who, like Shakspeare, give us characters and their accompanying problems without interpreting or solving them. Browning mediates them for us; not only gives them to us reflected from a glass of his own, but also supplies a light, which he had to take care should be of such intensity and colour as would illuminate every variety—in short, he had to metaphysicize.

The few glimpses in not very detailed outline of the universal side of Browning's *Weltanschauung*, which we find in his poems, and which I have here attempted to collect, brought me to think that if he was a philosopher proper he would have been a Hegelian—at least the universal side of his philosophy would have been Hegelian.

To begin with the idea of God or the Absolute. Both Hegel and Browning show us that God is "over us, under, round us, every side," at our gates, and no mystical intellectual or spiritual intuitions like those of Schelling or Shelley are necessary to reach him. We have found God when we have recognized and realized the identity of Being and Thought, of Love and Knowledge. Power corresponds to Hegel's principle of negation—the moving, differentiating element in the world. Knowledge (Thought) tends to integrate Love (Being), which Power had differentiated, and it is ever bringing back the manifold centrifugal productions of Power to the centrality of Love, and thus progressing in the realization of a unity in which Power, and the accompanying Falsehood and Evil, will be a suspended moment.

A great service that Hegel performed for philosophy was his method; and the spirit of this method pervades Browning's reasoning. It depends on recognizing that when we think anything, we implicitly think what it is not; and when we think a definite quality, we implicitly think its opposite—e. g. good and evil, bright and dark. Thus affirmation involves negation, and identity involves difference. We have already called attention to the prominence of this truth in Browning: it is the *essence of Hegel*.

Good is positive, and must be ultimately victorious, with Hegel as with Browning. Hear Walt Whitman's lines on reading Hegel: "Roaming in thought over the Universe, I saw the little that is Good steadily hastening towards immortality, And the vast all that is call'd Evil I saw hastening to merge itself and become lost and dead."

The development of Hegel's pure, bare, undiluted Being through successive stages up to the complicated forms of State, Religion, Philosophy, is like the mounting of waves towering higher and higher, "one crowd but with many a crest"; and as the waves must fall in order to rise to a greater height, so the march of the Idea is a series of self-negations involving self-affirmations. But the poet has not to do, as the philosopher has, with a systematic history of the progress of the Universal Principle. By seeing into souls, Browning has obtained his notion of God, which is accordingly of an ethical nature, not merely logical. With him the absolute Idea is Love, which as a negative, self-revealing force phenomenally in Nature is Power, and, becoming conscious of itself *in individuals* as spirit, moves in a continually advancing process of reconciliation of its absolute noumenal permanence (Love) with its phenomenal mode of manifestation (Power).

An obvious objection (admitting of an obvious enough answer) that might be made against Browning's principle may be noticed. It may be said that Love has no meaning except as characterizing the relations of sentient beings; that to set it up seriously as a first universal principle, not only supplies no explanation, but is unwarranted,—either mystical or absurd; that it can be analyzed into simpler elements—its evolution traced back, for example, to Hegel's Being. This objection, although if Browning were a pure philosopher it would apply so far as to demand from him definite explanation and logical analysis, is really shallow. Browning knows, like all philosophers, that Time is phenomenal, and that an absolute Principle by its very notion is independent of Time, contains in itself the possibility of Time:

"Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure." (*R. Ben Ezra*.)

"Till earth's work stop and useless time run out." (*Death in Desert*.)

But the distinction between First and Final Cause depends on Time; and as the latter is a far fuller idea than the former, it is more adequate to express God, who is indifferent to the distinction: consequently Browning is strictly justified in conceiving God as Love, because he has found in the world Love as an abiding reality, to whose perfection the world's movement is tending as an *End*. But the proximate reason for the form which his universal principle takes is his individual and ethical (poetical), not universal and metaphysical (philosophical), standpoint.

A main point on which I wish throughout to insist is that Browning realizes the defect and falseness of one-sidedness, and never halts at half-truths: he always gives them their proper place in relation to each other and a higher unity. This, as is well known, is a great characteristic of Hegel.

VII. PERSONAL GOD: CHRISTIANITY: INDIVIDUALS.

Browning is generally spoken of as holding the doctrine of a personal God: the orthodox are glad, and the unbelieving shrug their shoulders. But it is plain that a *personal* God (in any meaning of the word "personal" that is intelligible to us) is inconsistent with the tenor of Browning's teaching. For God is not limited by time, as we have seen above, nor by space (compare *Ring and Book*, Pope, l. 1317, "There (which is nowhere) speech must babble thus! In the absolute immensity—"), and thus personality applied to him in our sense has no meaning: personal is a completely inadequate and therefore misleading term—"speech must babble thus!" Even supposing—a supposition which seems to me to have no basis, and to be due to superficial study—Browning does teach a personal God, his God is at all events a Being of a glorious kind whom we could feel glad to worship, far different from the diabolical God or divine Devil whom many are still taught to praise and pray to.

This may enable us to comprehend his attitude to Christian Dogma, of which there have also—even more so—been false ideas abroad.

If, as he holds, Love is God, then the greatest crisis in Love's conscious development as human spirit is when it first knows itself explicitly as Love,—that is, when man first recognizes that God, in whom he lives, moves, and has his being, is Love. But this recognition is the soul of Christianity; this gives it a divinity different in kind and not merely in degree from all other religions: its main dogma is true, though disfigured by so many false wraps. Historical questions about parthenogenesis, resurrection, ascension, are quite irrelevant to this truth, and owe all their significance to the false conception of a personal God. Browning's view transcends and includes the one-sidedness of the Churches and the Göttingen professor. Relative historical falseness or myth in the Christian creed is consistent with the absolute truth of the dogma: the professor clung to the former and rejected the latter, and thereby, to use an expressive German proverb, "schüttete das Kind mit dem Bade aus"; the preachers holding the dogma insist on the historical truth of the myth.

This view of Christianity is practically that of Hegel. But it is his individualism, so to speak, that gives Browning's view its peculiar character. Throughout the preceding remarks I have purposely dwelt

more on his conceptions of the evolving world and mankind as a collection of units, than on his view of the individual in himself and for himself—purposely because, the latter being more prominent, readers of Browning are much less likely to overlook it. We must now turn to the individual side of his *Weltanschauung*. The tendency nowadays among English scientific thinkers is to look on the human individual as a passing accidental mode of the universal energy, who contributes to the progress of humanity, but has no further significance. From an empirical standpoint this is true; but, like all empiricism, it is one-sided, and Browning teaches us that the individual has a worth and meaning in and for himself independent of his worth and meaning for the world: he comes and goes, and serves the world while he stays, but the world also serves him, is meant to try him and turn him forth “sufficiently impressed”: he is related to *it* indirectly as a particular member of a multitude, but as an individual he is directly related to the Absolute, and possesses universal value. He has a significance in time and space, as a unit helping in the process of the universe; but he has also a primary significance for himself that is independent of these limitations; and since this latter significance, being absolute, is superior and logically prior to the former, which is only relative, it must legislate morality (cf. *Statue and Bust*, and monologue of Caponsacchi in *Ring and Book*, l. 1812, &c.). A man's highest boast is—

“not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I,—to the wheel of life,
With shapes and colours rife,
Bound dizzily,—mistake my end, to slake thy thirst.”

This would be the place to speak of—I can now only refer to—the autonomy of the Will, an important and often-noticed element in Browning's teaching; for the right of an individual will to autonomy depends upon its universal value.

And here I must again call attention to the incomplete and unsatisfying character of man's work, for to the individual this is a gauge of his universality. His individuality goes out beyond its work, and is like a space without bound which the work, at least in this cramped life, can never fill: the soul's “lone way” is limitless, and its home is not here.

This union of individualism and universalism in Browning is perhaps most strikingly set forth in *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, and in the Epilogue of *Three Speakers*, which shows its bearing on Christianity, and is, I think, the decisive passage as to Browning's view. The simple universalism of David, who worships with the *senses* in a temple made with hands, and the particularism of Renan, who is sceptical because historical difficulties

give pause to the *understanding*, are superseded by the individualism of the Third Speaker, whose *reason* transcends the simple conviction of David and the intellectual doubt of Renan, by seeing that both are reconcilable when transformed into parts of a higher view: as an individual personality, Christ was God (self-conscious Love); as a particular unit in the world he was man, subject to the laws of the world's machinery. It is for the individual that his personality and divinity have their significance: progressive humanity and scientific history concern themselves only with the phenomenal effects produced by his teaching independently of his personality.

And thus Browning's view is on the one side consistent with all Herbert Spencer's philosophy, whose result is to show that egoism and altruism (the interests of the individual and of society) are in gradual process of conciliation; but he gives prominence to another side also, in which virtue and vice have an inward significance for the individual, apart from the evolution of the world.

In Browning are the germs of a religion that transcends ecclesiastical Christianity and Comte's Positivism, and includes the truth of both.

In connection with his individualism should be considered his original views of the relations of men and women, which I can but barely touch on. An individual's soul has two sides: the potential and the actual, the divine and the human, reality and show. But the inner side can be revealed to the object of sexual love, and so even in this world to a certain extent actualize its divinity:

"Was there nought better than to enjoy?
No feat which, done, would make time break,
And let us pent-up creatures through
Into eternity, our due?
No forcing earth teach heaven's employ?"—*Dis aliter visum*.

Thus an individual receives a revelation of Love from another of opposite sex (sex, it must not be forgotten, is only phenomenal), and this person might be called a Personal God, as the vehicle of the revelation of the Absolute God. It is this love alone that can reach to the inner pent-up side of the soul, else unrevealed and "locked fast," but let loose by "love for a key." Shelley reached this view by spiritual intuition (witness *Epipsychidion*), and Dante said of Beatrice, "*Che lume fia tra 'l vero e lo 'ntelletto*"; but Browning, combining the reason of the philosopher with the instinct of a poet, first worked it consistently out. See on this subject *Fifine*, *Dramatic Lyrics* passim, *James Lee's Wife*, *The Worst of it*, *Dis aliter visum*, *Too Late*, *Youth and Art*, *Statue and Bust*, &c., but above all, *One Word More*. This two-sidedness of souls is the leading idea running through the *Pacchiarotto* volume.

VIII. IMMORTALITY.

As a consequence of his individual point of view, Mr. Browning has reached a higher standpoint than the vague pantheism of, for example, Mr. Tennyson's *In Memoriam*, in the same way as the German Transcendentalists, beginning with Kant, got beyond the pantheism of Spinoza. The universe exists for the individual as much as the individual for the universe: he is immortal. But immortality in Browning's poems has a different significance from that which it ordinarily conveys. (*Personal* immortality is as inadequate a term as personal God.) It does not imply memory in the sense of an unbroken chain of consciousness—which has significance only in time—nor yet an absorption into unconsciousness: it implies a state inconceivable to us, limited as we are by phenomenal conditions,—a state which may involve other manifestations in other worlds not a few. There is indeed one way, according to Browning, in which it is possible for some to approximate to a conception and gain a foretaste of this state which may be called heaven—namely by music. Music, as Hegel says, frees from the limit of space— and also partially suspends time. Past and future seem mixed into one present ideal emotion:—"Presences plain in the place; or, fresh from the protoplast," "or else the wonderful Dead who have passed through the body and gone" are not wanting "in the glare and glow." It is our completest revelation of God: earth attains to heaven; there is no more near nor far. Mr. Herbert Spencer has well spoken of cadences as the comments of the emotion on the propositions of the intellect. Thus in music ideas and emotions, love and knowledge, are fused in a perfect mixture, that is, an anticipation of the absolute union of love and knowledge—the goal to which both the individual and the universe tend.

As I said before, while Shakspeare sets us problems, Browning tries to give us solutions, or at least grounds for hoping that there are solutions that are not merely negative. Hamlet's last words are, "The rest is silence"; Romeo and Othello "look their last" and "die upon a kiss"; but with Browning silence means sound, and in the hand of the dead Evelyn Hope lies a leaf, earnest of a future.

To some this belief in "silence implying sound" will appear very consoling; others will find more comfort in an eternal night in which "silence is more than all tunes." But it is not consolation or pathos that Browning offers (and for this reason in certain moods we find Mr. Swinburne's or Mr. Matthew Arnold's poems more solacing): his message to us is to remember that our aspirations, our ways of life and manners of thought, our seeking after Love, and our love for Beauty, are all so much gain for the individual soul, and have an eternal value

for it, quite beyond the passing delight or the good contributed thereby to the world without. "There shall never be one lost good! what was, shall live as before."

"All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;
Not its semblance, but itself," &c.

Take this in connection with *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, verses 23, 24, 25.

Thus each individual beauty or affection on earth has an import for eternity through its influence on an individual's soul,

"a sunset-touch,
A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
A chorus-ending from Euripides;"

and with a chorus-ending from Euripides I conclude, as expressing a truth that Browning has ever in view—the correlation of Love and Beauty as of *absolute* significance:

ὅ,τι καλὸν φίλον αἰεί.

P.S. It has been objected that there is inconsistency in conceiving God as concrete and self-conscious Love, and at the same time refusing the predicate "personal." I think the question may be one of words more than the objectors suspect. On the one hand, God is manifested in the individual as *his* (the individual's) *personality*, and in this sense God may be called personal; on the other hand, as a universal, God is impersonal: but these sides are mutually complementary, and each is as inadequate as the other to express the Absolute, which, while it contains in itself the conditions of both, is indifferent to the distinction, and so neither of the adjectives (personal and impersonal) can accurately be predicated of it, though of course *personal* is the higher conception of the two, as is indicated by the histories of Philosophy and Religion. We are not entitled to speak of the Absolute as personal because it contains the conditions of personality, just as its containing the conditions of space does not entitle us to speak of it as extended. In short, to arrive at the notion of God we must raise the notion of *person* to a universal: we thereby suspend the essence of *person* in a new and higher notion, and thus not only is "personal" a wrong predicate to apply to God, but *universal person* is a false description, because it sets the two terms of the notion abstractly side by side, and so implies that they are still contradictory and unreconciled, whereas in the concrete notion of God (the Idea) they are suspended moments of a higher unity. (Note: *the opposition of abstract and concrete* must not be taken to imply such a contrast, for example, as of Thought and Life; it is the contrast—cf.

sect. v.—of a one-sided with a complete view, of the grasping of thought which seizes but a part with the grasp which holds the whole. Thus in the very example instanced, to look upon Life as concrete is an abstract point of view, because Life expresses only one side of the whole of Thought.)

Now I have tried to show that Browning, while insisting—as his purposes demanded—chiefly on the individual side, nevertheless does not neglect the universal side. He does not conceive Love as bound up with personality (personality rather expresses the form in which Love knows itself in the individual), but conceives it as the unity that underlies and forms the connecting bond of both sides, and it is consequently his expression of God. It is not my object to criticize, but merely to exhibit, what I consider to be Browning's teaching; and the purpose of this note is to defend my reading of Browning against the charge of formal inconsistency.

I may add, as it is in the interests of ethics more than of metaphysics, that the Personality of God is so obstinately clung to, that this conception is even more plainly untenable from an ethical than from a metaphysical standpoint; for, thus viewed, "personal God" becomes a contradiction in terms, since it expresses God as co-ordinated with other persons,—superior indeed in degree, but *qua* person co-ordinate. Such a personal Being may be a fine abstract ethical ideal, but is not God. The Christian religion first obtains its true significance when this remnant of anthropomorphism, the doctrine of a personal God, is laid aside.

In general such objections seem due to the respectable but unfounded prejudice that it is blasphemy to deny personality of God. The retort might be made, that it is they who blaspheme, in limiting God by the category of personality. Mr. Herbert Spencer well speaks of the "erroneous assumption that the choice is between personality and something lower than personality; whereas the choice is rather between personality and something higher."

SCRAPS.

AN IMITATION.

The following has been sent me, as from the *Examiner* of Aug. 5, 1876, as a poem of Browning's left out of my *Bibliography*. But that he never wrote it, is certain. I only reprint it to stop any one else attributing it to him.—F.

TO MY CRITICS.

(Written since my last publication [*Pacchiarotto*].)

(1)
So, Master Critic, I'm told you think
I should lend you my loving cup,
And fill it too with the best of drink,
Give you in short both bite and sup. 4

(2)
No doubt you fancy yourself clever,
And fit to tell me what to say ;
You have perhaps a strong enough lever
To hoist me into light of day? 8

(3)
You'd have me stand upon a stage
Like a naked Spanish acrobat,
And go through my tricks. You'll then engage
To send about the begging hat? 12

(4)
You say I should sing, I should not prate ;
But which knows best what each should do ?
You say my large poems are only a spate
Of dirty brown water, a hullabaloo ! 16

(5)
Then when I issue a volume of short,
You snigger and sniff as if you'd got
Something to show up for Philistine sport,
A flea in my ear, a bug, a bot ! 20

(6)
But I am a favorite of the Nymphs,
And if you knew your place you'd drop
Upon your knees, you niggery sumphs,
In the back slum of the editor's shop. 24

(7)
You would like, no doubt, to knock and ring,
To be just hail fellow well met with me ;
But I've slops dirtier still to fling
About you, and I shall, you'll see ! 28

R— B—.

Bibliography, p. 156. "Browning, whom I met beside him [*Ruskin*], is, in point of complexion, a fine contrast ; dark in hair, eyebrow, and luxuriant beard as a Spaniard or Portuguese, which he very much resembles. A fine, large, expansible dark eye, and a mouth, not exactly poetic, but wonderful for its facility, arrest you at once."—From "The Life and Letters of Sydney Dobell." Edited by E. J. London : Smith, Elder & Co. 1878. Vol. I. Chap. V. page 260. Lines 14—19.—T. J. Wise.

XIV.

ON "BISHOP BLOUGRAM'S APOLOGY."

BY THE REV. PROF. E. JOHNSON, M.A.

(Read at the 7th Meeting of the Browning Society, on Friday, May 26, 1882.)

THIS is one of those "dramatic monologues" in which the Poet has shown so remarkable an originality and skill. Introduction: the "dramatic monologue."

The dramatic monologue differs from a soliloquy in this: while there is but one speaker, the presence of a silent second person is supposed, to whom the arguments of the speaker are addressed. Perhaps such a situation may be termed a novelty of invention in our Poet. It is obvious that the dramatic monologue gains over the soliloquy in that it allows the artist greater room in which to work out his conception of character. We cannot gaze long at a solitary figure on a canvas, however powerfully treated, without feeling some need of relief. In the same way a soliloquy (comp. the great soliloquies of Shakspeare) cannot be protracted to any great length without wearying the listener. The thoughts of a man in self-communion are apt to run in a certain circle, and to assume a monotony. The introduction of a second person acting powerfully upon the speaker throughout, draws the latter forth into a more complete and varied expression of his mind. The silent person in the background, who may be all the time master of the situation, supplies a powerful stimulus to the imagination of the reader. In the following exposition it will be convenient for clearness' sake to refer to the piece as if it were a dialogue.

I will not linger upon the merely artistic or amusing qualities of the piece; noting simply in passing with what skill the gravest subjects are relieved by the careless ease of the treatment; and how the keenest satire of human vices or foibles conceals deep sympathy for human nature itself.

Mr. Gigadibs, the critic of Bp. Blougram's life, is a young man of thirty (p. 296). He is immature, desultory and impulsive. He has not yet wrestled with the hard problems of actual life, nor with those of speculative thought. Hence his reasoning is of a purely abstract or juvenile character. The Persons: Contrast of Character. Gigadibs. Children, we all

know, are the clearest and most merciless of logicians. The only fault in their reasoning about the conduct of their elders is, that it is too mathematical. They allow nothing for the friction of actual life. They do not understand the difficulty of working abstract principles into conduct. Probably we are all in like manner juvenile reasoners; a *doctrinaire*. reasoners in respect of problems of conduct which we only look at from the outside and in the abstract. He who has not lived the life of the working politician or artist can be but a *doctrinaire* in reference to politics or art. In like manner, Gigadibs is but a *doctrinaire* in reference to the life of the ecclesiastic and religious teacher. He reasons very clearly and very irritatingly to his antagonist; and at the same time very helplessly.

Blougram.

The Bp. overcomes Gigadibs; but has still to face our criticism (the poet's and reader's, who have overheard his "monologue").

Blougram, on the other hand, is a man of sixty (p. 294), and a master, not only of all the poor dialectic with which the younger man attacks him, but of life and of those secrets of the human heart, which defy all logic, because they are before and after it. He has no difficulty in beating down the weapons of his opponent, or in eluding what he laughs at as "fool's bolts, soon shot." But whether at the same time he succeeds with his "Apology" for his own life, is entirely another question. The satirist himself has given us a clear clue by which to follow the windings of the Bp.'s argument. At the end of the poem (p. 297), he tells us (1) that B. was only sincere in about half of his speech; (2) that the rest, though unsound, was put in a way unanswerable by his opponent; (3) that his rhetorical devices consisted in giving an assumed fixity to certain passing ideas of his own (the cabin-simile in particular); in suppressing the real premises from which he reasoned, and so in calling true things by wrong names. Socrates once compared a sophist to the Hydra:¹ it is a many-headed monster of fallacy that we have to deal with in Bp. Blougram. It is of not much avail to attack him in detail. He is wrong in the concealed premises from which all his reasoning starts. The root is at fault; and nothing will serve but extirpation (argumentatively speaking) as applied to him. At the same time, I prefer to consider his sophistry as ironical. No man (it seems to me) of the Bp.'s calibre ever seriously reasoned as he does in portions of his argument.

Although the admirable sketch of the Bp. may remind us strongly, in certain external traits, of an ecclesiastic once well-known among us, it would be obviously unfair to treat Bp. Blougram as a whole, otherwise than as an "imaginary person." Yet any bishop might well *feel flattered* in having so dialectical a head attributed to him as that

¹ Euthydemus, p. 297.

which the poet has fitted on the shoulders of his "Blougram"; and very possibly some Catholics may have sighed as they reflected what an apologist and casuist was lost to the Church in Mr. Browning.

Most briefly let us recall the features of Blougram as self-described. He is a man fond of good living; fond besides, of books and pictures, of intellectual speculation; of all in short that we designate "culture." He has a body and a soul which "exact a comfortable care in many ways" (p. 274). Withal, he has the instinct of a powerful nature for domination over others; he needs the respect and obedience of mankind. Lastly, he is a man of delicate and fastidious taste; which leads him to veil these instincts under a high grace of manner, an affected modesty and reluctance to take the honours and good things the world would force upon him. There is a better side to his nature; but G. is not the man to whom he will show it.

Peculiarities of the Bishop; ironical self-description.

"Thus I am made, thus life is best for me,
And thus that it should be I have procured;
And thus it could not be another way,
I venture to imagine."

He has solved the problem of life; he is a success.

Why then apologize for such a life? So utterly convinced that he is "the right man in the right place," why entrap poor Mr. Gigadibs, the obscure and despised scribbler, into a situation where hospitality is the pretext for opening upon him so tremendous a battery of rhetoric? The answer is, that the Bp. has heard a voice, whether that of Gigadibs or of his own conscience, or the one in echo of the other, which clearly says, in spite of all his self-complacency: *Your life is not ideal*. This is what stings him, more perhaps than any charge that could be brought against a man of such tastes and such aspirations. This is the voice he would so eloquently clamour down, and with which at the end he remains secretly contending. For he knows, if any man does, that if that nameless charm, that last inexpressible grace we term the Ideal, be wanting to the boasted construction of his life, it is a failure. Or say that it is "all but" a success, how damning is the exception which lies in that little "all but."

He is really stung by the imputation that he is a sham.

Here, then, is the point of attack, not for a moment to be lost sight of amidst the cloud of the Bp.'s defensive movements.

The Ideal Life:

What is the ideal life? According to Mr. Gigadibs' definition it is: "to do what one prefers, to speak as one thinks, and as one cannot help (p. 264); to believe or disbelieve no matter what, so long as on that point, whatever it be, one looses one's mind, and is wholly true to oneself." In other words, it is essential to the life for the Ideal that a man should have fair opportunity for self-realization and self-representation in the full

characterized loosely by G.

Freedom requisite to self-realization

sense of those words. If he, by his own act, like Bp. Blougram, cuts himself off from the hope of this self-realization, his life must be un-ideal, that is mean and vulgar. In particular, it is essential to the ideal life that the man should bring his belief and his external calling into correspondence. This B. does not and cannot do (in the opinion of G.); therefore his life is not ideal. The assumption of G. is that B. is not the absolute believer in the dogmas of the Church he allows the world to suppose him to be. G., then, sees through him, and despises him. The reply of B. is indirect, and aims to show that G.'s reasoning is based upon ignorance and assumption. It is mere assumption that absolute belief is possible for any man. It is mere ignorance of life to suppose that it can be led upon some ideal or abstract plan. B. admits that he is not an absolute believer, and grounds the defence of his life on the following principles: 1. That absolute faith and absolute unbelief are equally impossible states of mind for any man. 2. An imperfect unbelief, therefore, or an imperfect belief is alone possible. These are only two different ways of describing the same intermediate state of mind. If a man, *e. g.*, finds more difficulty in believing in the existence and goodness of God than in disbelieving, this is imperfect unbelief. If another sees more difficulty in disbelieving the same, this is imperfect faith. B. has imperfect faith, and having it, he has all that is required. Thus B.'s self-defence resolves itself into an examination of the practical problem of life. He cleverly chooses his own ground, and evades his antagonist from the first. It may be convenient to divide the whole Apology as follows: I. The Problem of Life: what it is, and how B. has solved it. II. Criticisms of this view of life examined and replied to. III. Defence of "imperfect faith" as a spring of action. IV. Defence of worldliness as a spring of action.

I.

The Problem of Life: (1) Stated in general.

The problem of life (says B.) for every man, is in some sense self-realization. But the way to set about its solution is not to follow our imagination and endeavour to make the facts bend to our fancies; but it is first to find out what the laws of living actually are, and then to realize as much of the good or beautiful as we can in accordance with them. We must make a compromise, in short, between the claims of the ideal and the real. And if our attachment to the ideal stands in the way of our actual comfort and enjoyment (p. 265), let the ideal for the time be cast overboard. Life is like a six months' voyage, and we like *in passengers*. If you, G., persist in bringing a little library of

The fallacious simile.

Greek and French books, an Italian picture and a marble bath on board, you will have proved your good taste and your folly at the same time. You will have to leave those luxuries behind; while I, having furnished my cabin for comfort, shall have proved that I understand what the case requires. The problem of life, then, is to extract as much of comfort as we may out of existing situations, and let all our higher tastes have our second thoughts. (This may be so to an old man of sixty, but not to a young man of thirty.) It is always fallacious to reason from illustrations; and this cabin-simile contains the root of B.'s fallacies. G. ought not to have let it pass. Life *cannot* be seriously compared to a mere sea-passage, except in one or two points. The *simile* begs the whole question in favour of a realistic view of life.

(p. 268.) But next let us consider the problem of life from the stand-point of the unbeliever or free-thinker, such as is Mr. G., and as the Bp. will assume himself for the sake of argument to be. You will find then that "absolute" unbelief is just as impossible as "absolute" belief. Imagination is very near to faith, if it be not faith itself. We are governed by imagination; and sights and sounds of nature and other fragmentary experiences stimulate the imagination and hint the existence of a supersensual world which you had resolved to banish from your thoughts.

(2) From the point of view of the unbeliever or free-thinker.

Fixed unbelief a psychological impossibility.

— "Just when we are safest, there's a sunset-touch,
A fancy from a flower-bell, some one's death,
A chorus-ending from Euripides,—
And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears
As old and new at once as Nature's self,
To rap and knock and enter in our soul,
Take hands and dance there, a fantastic ring
Round the ancient idol, on his base again,—
The grand Perhaps!"

Involuntary mental representation of the supernatural in certain experiences.

So says Byron:—

"Slight withal may be the things which bring
Back on the heart the weight which it would fling
Aside for ever: it may be a sound—
A tone of music—summer's eve—or spring—
A flower—the wind—the ocean—which shall wound,
Striking the electric chain wherewith we are darkly bound;
And how and why we know not, nor can trace
Home to its cloud this lightning of the mind,
* * * * *
Which out of things familiar, undesign'd,
When least we deem of such, calls up to view
The spectres whom no exorcisms can bind."¹

¹ *Childe Harold*, xxiii. and xxiv. Cf. a beautiful passage in X. de Maistre's *Voyage autour de ma Chambre*, Chap. xxi: "ce n'est point sur un syllogisme, etc."

Then again the ordinary arguments for Christianity will occur to you, not because they are in every book on the "Evidences"; they are in the books because they are in the heart. Follow the lead of the heart, and in some sense or other you will be brought to Christ. Difficulties of belief may arise from our ignorance of the perspective of thought; or possibly, may be for the trial and education of faith.

A state of soul
intermediate
between ex-
tremes alone
possible;

(p. 270.) The actual condition then of every thoughtful

mind is that of oscillation between belief and unbelief in matters of religion. The demand for absoluteness or fixity

on the one side, the pretence to it on the other, is made by those who talk in abstractions, not really knowing what they are talking about. S. Paul says that at present our thought moves in the sphere of Enigma (1 Cor. xiii). Consequently, it is a mistake to be too knowing in our dogmatism, or too dogmatic in our agnosticism. Now comes in the

but a man
may profess an
extreme
position.

practical problem: Shall a man standing in this twilight, or *chiaro-scuro* of intuition, say that he stands in the light or in the darkness? Shall he (in B's phraseology) "choose belief" or unbelief? What he means by this fallacious phrase is,

The man who
means to get
the best of this
world must
affirm,—i. e. re-
present belief,

Shall the man represent himself to the world as a believer or as an unbeliever? (pp. 270—1.) The answer is, that his worldly interest lies on the side of affirmation. The man who chooses the part of the doubter or critic is like a man who prefers to be a bed-ridden dreamer rather than to act and enjoy.

The world will treat him as an impracticable, and keep its good things for the man who assumes the good of life in his particular sphere of

and this as
thoroughly as
possible.
Be in earnest
in your acting
of the part.

action. (p. 272.) Again, if one resolves to assume the part of a believer, it will be well to play it thoroughly. Although, as B. has admitted, and as he will presently again insist, absolute belief is not a possible state of mind, and

there are doubts he can never solve; it would be very unsuccessful acting of the part were this allowed to appear to the public. The world "that gives us the good things" we must have constantly in our eye. It is for the most part a weak "purblind mass," looking to B. and his fellows for guidance; and it will do this no longer, if B. honestly confesses that he is only purblind himself.

Sarcastic
self-application
of this theory,
B.'s triumphant
success in life
proves its truth
and worth.

(p. 273.) Now to apply these principles to B. himself.

He was born into a certain ecclesiastical system. And this system had the following surpassing advantages for him:

1. It offered him an easy means of living. 2. It was the most precise and definite representation of Christianity existing in the world. 3. It was a most potent instrument for working upon the world. Here then was the Bp.'s "cabin" furnished for him completely

to his mind. He took the place so admirably fitted for him; all has turned out well; his life is a perfect success. And the implication is, that had B., as a young man, rejected these advantages to dream of the ideal, he would have been a fool, as G. actually is.

II.

But now the Bp. will listen to objections and criticisms and reply to them. 1. "Yours is a mean view of life and of success," says G. "You have substituted vulgar comfort and ambition for a noble self-realization." (p. 275.) "Well," replies the Bp., "if I am a vulgar man, I must pursue vulgar objects. Beasts must live beasts' lives." (Yes; but a beast never said nor could say so. Only a man can say this, and thereby betray the consciousness that he is *not* a beast.) "My life on the contrary is one of subtle intellectual enjoyment": this is what he means to hint. 2. "But," urges G., "your success will not bear true criticism. A man like you cannot be content with the indiscriminating admiration of the many; you must be anxious to know what profound judges really think of your life-performance; just as Verdi amidst the uproarious applause which rewards his poor opera, steals a glance at Rossini sitting calmly in his stall." The reply of B. to this remark shows a consummate knowledge of human nature, and a triumphant audacity founded on that knowledge. It is just these keen judges whom he delights to fascinate and to bewilder. In the first place these deep judges of human nature bewilder themselves by their own subtlety. In the second place, they are fascinated by dubious characters (pp. 276-7), who hover in the twilight: "honest thieves, tender murderers, superstitious atheists, demireps"—and Bp. Blougrams. If such people make a false step and cease to be dubious, it is all over with them. But so long as they keep their giddy equilibrium, like a boy astride a chimney-pot, they will be wondered at, and treated as mysteries and psychological enigmas. Now B. has the secret of perfect equilibrium; in other words, perfect presence of mind and audacity, founded on knowledge of the situation. And lastly, the time itself favours him. As compared with previous periods, this latter half of this 19th century is in thought and feeling itself dubious. It does not blindly believe, like the Middle Age, nor disbelieve as a matter of course with the "Illumination" of a century ago. It is the very twilight time that favours a twilight creature like B. His chief adroitness, it seems, consists in having selected this period to be born in! He snaps his fingers at your clever men. It is just they whom he baffles and commands.

Objections:
(1) B.'s notion of success is low and vulgar.

(2) Your success will not bear the highest criticism.

(3) One critic at least B. cannot escape, viz. G.

Reply:
Show me a possible better life.

Some examples considered.

3. But Mr. G. is not deceived; nor is he likely to be after this frank confession. *He* at least judges, condemns and despises B. because his life is not ideal. But the judge is bound in fairness to state the grounds of his condemnation: in other words, he ought to point out a possible ideal which B. might have honourably striven for and attained. Let us consider some of these ideals: Napoleon, *e. g.* Would you have me a Napoleon? Why, if you look at Napoleon critically you will find that he was essentially a vulgar man¹ in his ideas, feelings, aims; though a giant in power. Besides, his life was that of an awful scourge. No man could pursue such a career unless he either had profound faith in a Divine call to pursue it, or some fanatical belief in himself which would serve the same end; I, who have neither one nor the other, would not be as a matter of taste, as a matter of conscience could not be, a Napoleon.

(pp. 280-81.) Then Shakspeare. Well (*a*), I could not write like Shakspeare. We must distinguish the poet from the man. The poet is impossible to rival; and (*b*) as to the man: Shakspeare was no more of an Idealist than I am. On the contrary, the probability is he would have gladly changed his estate for that of "Pandolph of fair Milan Cardinal"; in short, for that of the Blougram of the period. It seems more likely that the greatest genius of England would have made B. his ideal, than reasonable that B. should make that genius his own ideal. Your great men do not bear looking too closely at as models.²

(p. 282.) But Luther: there was indeed, the Roman bishop admits, and in doing so reveals another side of his character, an ideal life! Yes; he admires and envies Luther. But alas! Luther is an impossible ideal, because he has not Luther's enthusiasm. 'Tis the best thing; "only we can't command it! Paint fire, it will not therefore burn." But B. in speaking so warmly of Luther's enthusiasm and the "heaven in his heart" which it secured him, betrays himself. He is not the cynic nor the sensualist he pretends to be for the sake of putting down the young man who has stung him to the quick.

(p. 283.) Then Strauss as an ideal. If Luther succeeded in his life-work nothing remains to be done in that line; but if he did not, then Strauss is the logical successor of Luther. For Luther emancipated the world from the dogmas of the Church; while Strauss goes a step further, and would emancipate us from all dogmas whatever. Well, B. admits, on the assumption of unbelief, that he might be a Strauss; but what inducement is there to be a Strauss? People won't

¹ Cf. R. W. Emerson's *Essay on Napoleon*.

² Cf. R. W. Emerson's *Essay on Shakspeare*.

thank you for emancipating them. Tell them they owe the priest nothing and they will take you at your word. Besides, it is icy cold, the region of negations and abstractions to which the dialectic of Strauss conducts you. The result, then, of this examination of the literary man's ideas is, that B. cannot be a Napoleon for one reason, nor a great poet for another, nor a great Reformer for another. He is already what Shakspeare would have desired to be as a man. He could be a Strauss; only on the whole as Strauss does not get much out of this world for his pains, and stakes nothing on the future at all, it seems most sensible to be a Catholic bishop, with an excellent investment in this world, and a chance of the next thrown in, though it be but the hundredth. Besides, Strauss is just a shade too positive and too logical in his unbelief. Strauss places no value upon indefinable presentiments; while B. allows there is a possibility of their truth. S. is a strict logician and irresistible on that ground; but B. admits that there may be things in heaven and earth not dreamt of in the clear Straussian dialectic. Strauss may be unanswerable, but it does not follow that he may not be in a sense wrong. In short, while B. has not enough mysticism to make him a Luther, he has just enough to prevent him from becoming a Strauss. Thus then, after the refutation of objections, and the analysis of faulty or impossible ideals, we fall back on our original position; B. is B. and cannot be any one else. The chequered state of mind, called "imperfect faith" is alone possible, and as such is sufficient for life's demands.

Result: B. cannot be other than he is—on the hypothesis of unbelief in Revelation.

III.

(p. 284.) In expounding this position B. abandons the defensive attitude, and rises to a prophetic height. What is faith? B. in reply cancels all his gross pretended realism, and becomes a chief apostle of idealism. (But it is difficult to keep up the illusion. We hear the mighty soul that spoke through *Saul* and *R. Ben Ezra* now speaking from behind this mask of *Blougram*.) What is faith? 1. It is the victorious energy of the free spiritual life in man, implying in every exhibition of itself the existence of its opposite, or doubt. Doubt and faith do but name two opposite aspects of the same thing, viz.: the living spirit of the man. Faith is a struggle, a process, the power of an endless life, the perpetual realization of an ever-receding ideal. It is not the barren act of mind supposed in the theology of controversy; it is above all an act of Will. 2. It does not depend on historic knowledge, nor on logical or metaphysical ability; it does depend on the moral affections. In reference to Christianity, therefore, the test-question

As actually an imperfect believer, he justifies his life.

The nature of Faith.

Application to Christianity.

must be: Is the Ideal in it admirable and lovable? The Divine Ideal in Christianity lies in a sphere independent of discrepancies or inconsistencies in the accidental facts. Who would be so irrelevant as to mix up the question of the personal character of B. with the question of the discrepancy or agreement in different accounts of his birthplace? Faith, then, is an act of the Will; it is the self-affirmation of the man as a whole against the negations of his understanding.

3. In any other sense it is not possible. "Pure faith" is practically but a phrase (p. 285). What it really means is pure vision which mortals cannot bear. If it is true that the creation reveals God to us, equally true is it that the creation conceals God from us. Even what we call evil is blessed; it is a protecting illusion we need; it disguises God until we can bear the sight of Him. The peace of faith is the peace not of a stagnant, but of a living and struggling consciousness. It is the calm of the archangel who feels the writhing dragon beneath his foot. It is not torpor, but the sense of life overcoming torpor: as when one takes a pinch of snuff.

Objections:
1. Absolute
faith has
existed.
No!

(p. 286.) But this position is disputed. In the Middle Ages, G. says, there was universal and unquestioning faith. There were no doubts on archæological subjects then. No, replies B., there was no doubt because there was no spiritual life in that golden age of wistful noodledom! There was plenty of blind assent to doctrines which were not understood (p. 287). Blank of faith and doubt alike, men for the most part lived barbarous and brutish lives!

Once more, faith is an internal struggle and process. As the ancient Heracleitus, philosopher taught, "War is the father of all things," so the poet: spiritual conflict is the source of endless growth. "Prolong that battle through his life! Never leave growing till the life to come!"

Conflict is the measure of vitality, and therefore of worth. Better, therefore, to insist upon people's believing in absurdities like winking Virgins, and compel them to the feet of the pope, than in the conceit of our finite reason assume to judge the ways of God! Here a great sophism is insinuated. It does not follow because faith means conflict, that you may force conflict on the minds of others that is unnatural and absurd.

Objection 2:
Absolute faith
does exist.
No!

(p. 288.) But, it is objected again, there is still an absolute belief existing among the ignorant in the Catholic world, *e. g.* the lazzaroni of Naples. On the contrary, replies B., the only fixed belief even among them is in the ordinary laws of Nature known in universal experience. That fire will burn, water drown, are absolute certainties to every mind; but there can be no picture of

the supersensual world, *e. g.* of the watchful eye of an unseen God, which is not of its nature liable to some doubt, even with the most believing.

To sum up: Speaking in his representative character as a Catholic bishop, B. repeats: The life of the Catholic is a perpetual affirmation (real or acted) of faith as a principle of action as opposed to doubt (p. 288). And in that character he will rather die than avow a doubt of the miracle of St. Januarius. He can allow no exceptions, no eliminations, nor purifications, because once admit the principle of exception, and there is no stopping until, carried through the whole series of Protestant negations, you land yourself in atheism! (His remark on Fichte is a misrepresentation; but it is near enough the truth in dealing with such as Gigadibs.)

Objection 3:
Why not purify this faith, *i. e.* relax the severity of the part you act? I won't—that is I can't.

(p. 289.) And would it not be better to go through with that destructive process, objects G., rather than leave a great growth of falsehood unpruned? No; because it is essential in order to govern the faith (*i. e.* imagination) of the purblind mass not to allow them the freedom of their thoughts. Our occupation and place would otherwise be gone; farewell to the comfortable cabin for life's voyage! In other words, truth for truth's sake is not compatible as an object with the ease and comfort requisite for the individual called Bp. Blougram; and once more, overboard they must go. Comfort, ease, power, are the main things to be considered; and so we end as we began.

Objection 4:
But you are encouraging lies.

Reply: Yes; lies, *i. e.* the perfect representations of fixed faith are necessary to govern the mass.

IV.

Lastly, the Bp. would frankly defend this worldliness as a principle of action. 1. The best pledge a man can give of his willingness to observe the requirements of any future state, is his actual observance of the requirements of the present. Suppose the next state to be one of pure spiritual enjoyment: that is no reason for losing the present.

Living for the present; the last and deepest spring of action.

2. *Sera nimis vita est crastina.* What a weakness or craze it is to give way to fancy, and be ever seeking to fit ourselves for a sphere of life we have not yet reached, and whose needs we do not yet understand. It is like a man journeying from North to South, going without comfort all the way, because he will not put on clothing at any given stage which he thinks will not be required at the next. The Bp. on the contrary lives "worldly in this world." Others live better for his comfort. So far as the mind of God may be known, it appears to approve his life. Or if God appear to keep silence, then each man's life is his own affair.

Objection :
" Truth is
ignored in this
scheme of life."
It is a fatal
objection to B.'s
special plead-
ing ; he can
only meet it by
a *tu quoque* !

Reply : You do
not and cannot
act up to your
own principle.

Immoral in
theory, you
dare not be so
in practice.

Counter reply :
picture of the
life of a simple
and honest man.

Argument
abandoned ; B.
retaliates upon
G. with insult
and contempt.

But there remains one last objection. In all the special pleading, Truth and her claims has been ignored. And this can never be safe. Truth demands of us that we should seem as we are, and be as we seem. Truth requires that we should not overact our part. If we are doubters, we ought not to represent the part of fixed believers. In short, our action should reflect our knowledge, says G.

Very well, says B. (evading the point which is really fatal to his theory) ; carry out your own principle ; act up to your light ! You are a free-thinker ; you belong to the school of the "Naturalists" who explain morality on the principle of sensualism or egoism (p. 291). According to the truth of morality as perceived by you, there is nothing to bind you to be moral. And yet you dare not be consistent. Blind instincts hold you back from the consequences of your own theories. You are the confessed slave of those moral instincts which you can give no account of ; and when it comes to the point, you will not and dare not live by the light of that clear reason of which you boast. I, on the contrary, recognize God in all my instincts, and I obey Him in obeying them ; I am self-consistent, and enjoy my life ; you are inconsistent, and do not enjoy your life.

This, replies G., is a misrepresentation of my position. The position is that of a plain man, who thinks he ought to try and see the truth that is seen (or said to be seen) by others. If he cannot, he has gained the right to quiet enjoyment. On the whole he is guided in his behaviour by his instincts, modified by the action of social opinion. But he will not pretend to a belief he does not possess. A life of liberty tempered by conventionality : this the "simple" man likes best. G. likes it best.

This B. denies, and in doing so finally returns with interest the scorn with which G. had assailed him at the beginning. G. really envies the bishop's lot. So insignificant is G. that B. can freely throw off the mask before him, which he dare not do before his own chaplain ; nobody will believe G.'s revelations about the bishop. G. professes to renounce such a life as that of B. ; and what has he to show in place of it ? Not the enthusiasm which, as B. again confesses, glorifies poverty and outvies his own worldly success. G. is no more an enthusiast than B. ; and all that he has to show as yet is a lively magazine article or two. Thus the measure that G. has meted out to his elder is measured to him again ; and B. is confident that he shall hear no more of contempt from that quarter !

And indeed the young literary man does depart from the bishop's presence the better for the conversation. Starting ^{Wholesome effect on G.} for Australia with an enormous supply of agricultural implements, he will shortly find himself at the sources of ideas and of genuine self-knowledge and experience. The struggle with nature and with the difficulties of thought: these have ever spiritually enriched men. And so we leave G. with his plough and his New Testament; the sunlight falls hopefully upon him, as he toils and thinks, thinks and toils. He is on the way to turn his vague ideals into solid realities; and in realities to find the genuine ideal. He will assail no more bishops.

REMARKS ON THE APOLOGY.

1. All that the Bp. says in his real character, as a thinker, is deeply true. To talk of absolute belief or absolute unbelief is to deal in phrases, instead of psychological fact, or heart-truths. When he admits that he has but an imperfect, *i. e.* a struggling and living faith, and contends that this is the only faith worthy of the name, his defence is sound.

2. But when he speaks in his representative character, *i. e.* as an actor of an absolute faith which he has not, before an ignorant public, he resorts to a duplicity which infects his whole apology. For in one breath he tells us that only an imperfect faith is possible; and in the next that we may "choose belief" which is absolute, and utterly intolerant of exceptions. Knowing that the chessboard is neither black nor white, but both black and white (or the shield gold *and* silver), you may swear to the public, to serve certain purposes, that it is absolutely white. This is a cynical contempt for the claims of Truth upon the individual; it ignores that there is an objective nature of things which neither our wishes nor our actions can affect.

3. He assumes, in daring contradiction to the religion of which he is a minister, that the real should be the first object in our thoughts, and the ideal second. The ideal life is the disinterested life. To choose the interested life is to exclude or at least place second the other, so far as the sphere of that choice extends. Christianity says, with sublime absoluteness: "Seek first the ideal, and all other things necessary in the real shall be added unto you." Christianity is in theory severely ideal, whatever allowance it may make for the difficulty of reducing its ideals to practice. B. by his misleading image of life as a cabin to be comfortably fitted for a voyage, reverses this. Life to a serious man is rather comparable to a high quest, a voyage of discovery, where comfort is entirely a second consideration.

4. But in all this he is ironical. He is resolved to give the loose thinker

before him a severe lesson. To the vague pretensions of a young man who would lead an ideal life without any definite belief in the worth of life itself to root it in, B. argumentatively opposes a formal and self-consistent realism, the adoption of which (he pretends) has made his life the success it is, while G.'s fantastic idealism will only end in failure. In short the Bp. feigns, and it seems unfair to take him at his word when he so frankly avows it, a gross worldliness. No man who was really so coarse a worldling would admit it unless in jest; the gross man is not conscious that he is gross. A man of B.'s spiritual tastes and insight is not gross, whatever he may say in careless contempt of his antagonist. Cynicism may be the mask of sensitive and misunderstood men, and of refined thinkers.

5. Lastly, B. suppresses certain "hell-deep instincts"; just as he suppresses the heaven-high instincts which unite us with truth. He has been stung by the scorn of the young man. "Contempt pierces the shell of the tortoise," says the Indian proverb. Old men, while they despise the ignorance of young men, wince at their criticism. G. thinks he knows a great deal about B.; B. knows that G. knows nothing worth knowing about him. Yet a man is capable of feeling intense resentment for an inferior who has fastened upon a weak point. Just as the sudden attack on a man's life will turn him, though the meekest of beings, into a fierce egotist in his self-defence: so the assault upon character will bring a man to bay. It is not the moment in which to expect the severest candour, or the loftiest recognition of truth in the abstract. The man's thought is centred upon self-preservation and retaliation on his foe. Before G. can see clearly to cast the mote out of B.'s eye, he must first cast the beam out of his own.

I will conclude, then, by saying that I refuse to part with our imaginary friend to whom we owe so much amusement and instruction, with the contempt which he does not deserve. The intellectual position of the Roman ecclesiastic in the nineteenth century must be one full of trial to a powerful mind like the Bishop's. It demands some sympathy from all serious men; and had the Bishop been approached in an opposite temper to that of G., he would have unfolded the amiable and noble side of his character, which peeps out in spite of his admirable assumption of extreme cynicism.

In a sense, G. is in the right, but not specially in the right in his attack on Blougram. The Bishop may not be living up to his ideal; but neither Mr. G. nor we are justified in judging him, unless we have found it possible and easy to live up to our own.

XV.

THE IDEA OF PERSONALITY, AS EMBODIED IN ROBERT BROWNING'S POETRY.

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(Read at the 8th Meeting of the Browning Society, June 23, 1882.)

Introduction, p. 293—301. I. *The Idea of Personality in Browning*, p. 302-307.

II. *Art as an Intermediate Agency of Personality*, p. 307-321.

"Subsists no law of Life outside of Life.

The Christ himself had been no Lawgiver,
Unless he had given the *life*, too, with the law."

THE importance of Robert Browning's poetry, as embodying the profoundest thought, the subtlest and most complex sentiment, and, above all, the most quickening spirituality of the age, has, as yet, with the exception of a few special and devoted students, received but a niggardly recognition. There are, however, many indications in the poetical criticism of the day, that upon it will finally be pronounced, though late, the verdict which has so long been its due. And the recent founding of a Society in England "to gather together some, at least, of the many admirers of Robert Browning, for the study and discussion of his works, and the publication of papers on them, and extracts from works illustrating them," is an earnest that something ere long will be done towards paying, in part, at least, a long-standing debt.

Mr. Browning's earliest poem, *Pauline* (he calls it, in the Preface to the reprint of it, in 1868, "a boyish work," though it exhibits the great basal thought of all his subsequent poetry), was published in 1843, since which time he has produced the largest body of poetry produced by any one poet, in English literature; and the range of thought and passion which it exhibits is greater than that of any other poet, without a single exception, since the days of Shakspeare. And he is the most like Shakspeare in his deep interest in human nature, in all its varieties of good and of evil. Though endowed with a powerful, subtle, and restless intellect, he has, throughout his voluminous poetry, made the strongest protest that has been made in these days, against mere intellect. And

his poetry has, therefore, a peculiar value in an age like the present—an age exhibiting “a condition of humanity which has thrown itself wholly on its intellect and its genius in physics, and has done marvels in material science and invention, but at the expense of the interior divinity.” It is the human heart, that is, the intuitive, the non-discursive side of man, with its hopes and its prophetic aspirations, as opposed to the analytic, the discursive understanding, which is to him a subject of the deepest and most scrutinizing interest. He knows that its deepest depths are “deeper than did ever plummet sound;” but he also knows, that it is in these depths that life’s greatest secrets must be sought. The philosophies excogitated by the insulated intellect, help nothing toward even a glimpse of these secrets. In one of his later poems, that entitled *House*, he has intimated, and forcibly intimated, his sense of the impossibility of penetrating to the Holy of Holies of this wondrous human heart, though assured as he is that all our hopes in regard to the soul’s destiny are warmed and cherished by what radiates thence. He quotes, in the last stanza of this poem, from Wordsworth’s sonnet on the Sonnet, “With this same key Shakspeare unlocked his heart,” and then adds, “*Did Shakspeare? If so, the less Shakspeare he!*”

Mrs. Browning, in the Fifth Book of her *Aurora Leigh*, has given a full and very forcible expression to the feeling which has caused the highest dramatic genius of the present day to seek refuge in the poem and the novel. “I will write no plays; because the drama, less sublime in this, makes lower appeals, defends more menially, adopts the standard of the public taste to chalk its height on, wears a dog-chain round its regal neck, and learns to carry and fetch the fashions of the day, to please the day; . . . ’Tis that, honouring to its worth the drama, I would fear to keep it down to the level of the footlights. . . . The growing drama has outgrown such toys of simulated stature, face, and speech, it also, peradventure, may outgrow the simulation of the painted scene, boards, actors, prompters, gaslight, and costume; and *take for a worthier stage, the soul itself, its shifting fancies and celestial lights, with all its grand orchestral silences to keep the pauses of the rhythmic sounds.*”

Robert Browning’s poetry is, in these days, the fullest realization of what is expressed in the concluding lines of this passage: he has taken for a worthier stage, the soul itself, its shifting fancies and celestial lights, more than any other poet of the age. And he has worked with a thought-and-passion capital greater than the combined thought-and-passion capital of the richest of his poetical contemporaries. And he *has thought nobly of the soul, and has treated it as, in its essence, above the fixed and law-bound system of things which we call nature; in other*

words, he has treated it as supernatural. "Mind," he makes the Pope say, in *The Ring and the Book*,—and his poetry bears testimony to its being his own conviction and doctrine,—“Mind is not matter, nor from matter, but above.” With every student of Browning, the recognition and acceptance of this, must be his starting-point. Even that which impelled the old dog, in his poem entitled *Tray* (*Dramatic Lyrics*, First Series), to rescue the beggar child that fell into the river, and then to dive after the child's doll, and bring it up, after a long stay under water, the poet evidently distinguishes from matter,—regards as “not matter nor from matter, but above:”

“And so, amid the laughter gay,
Trotted my hero off,—old Tray,—
Till somebody, prerogativéd
With reason, reasoned: ‘Why he dived,
His brain would show us, I should say.

John, go and catch—or, if needs be,
Purchase that animal for me!
By vivisection, at expense
Of half-an-hour and eighteen pence,
How brain secretes dog's soul, we'll see!’”

In his poem entitled *Halbert and Hob* (*Dramatic Lyrics*, First Series), quoting from Shakspere's *King Lear*, “Is there a reason in nature for these hard hearts?” the poet adds, “O Lear, That a reason *out* of nature must turn them soft, seems clear!”

Mind is, with Browning, *supernatural*, but linked with, and restrained, and even enslaved by, the natural. The soul, in its education, that is, in its awakening, becomes more and more independent of the natural, and, as a consequence, more responsive to higher souls and to the Divine. *All spirit is mutually attractive*, and the degree of attractiveness results from the degree of freedom from the obstructions of the material, or the natural. Loving the truth implies a greater or less degree of that freedom of the spirit which brings it into *sympathy* with the true. “If ye abide in My word,” says Christ (and we must understand by “word” His own concrete life, the word made flesh, and living and breathing), “if ye abide in My word” (that is, continue to live My life), “then are ye truly My disciples; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John viii. 32).

In regard to the soul's *inherent* possessions, its microcosmic potentialities, Paracelsus is made to say (and this may be taken, too, as the poet's own creed), “Truth is *within* ourselves; it takes no rise from outward things, whate'er you may believe: there is an inmost centre in us all, where truth abides in fullness; and around, wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in, this perfect, clear perception—which is truth.

A baffling and perverting carnal mesh blinds it, and makes all error: and, *to know*, rather consists in opening out a way whence the imprisoned splendour may escape, than in effecting entry for a light supposed to be without."

All possible thought is *implicit* in the mind, and waiting for release—waiting to become *explicit*. "Seek within yourself," says Goethe, "and you will find everything; and rejoice that, without, there lies a Nature that says yea and amen to all you have discovered in yourself." And Mrs. Browning, in the person of Aurora Leigh, writes: "The cygnet finds the water; but the man is born in ignorance of his element, and feels but blind at first, disorganized by sin in the blood,—his spirit-insight dulled and crossed by his sensations. Presently we feel it quicken in the dark sometimes; then mark, be reverent, be obedient,—for those dumb motions of imperfect life are oracles of vital Deity attesting the Hereafter. Let who says 'The soul's a clean white paper,' rather say, a palimpsest, a prophet's holograph defiled, erased, and covered by a monk's,—the Apocalypse by a Longus! poring on which obscure text, we may discern perhaps some fair, fine trace of what was written once, some off-stroke of an alpha and omega expressing the old Scripture."

This "fair, fine trace of what was written once," it was the mission of Christ, it is the mission of all great personalities, of all the concrete creations of Genius, to bring out into distinctness and vital glow. It is not, and cannot be, brought out,—and this fact is emphasized in the poetry of Browning,—it cannot be brought out, through what is born and resides in the brain: it is brought out, either directly or indirectly, by the attracting power of magnetic personalities, the ultimate, absolute personality being the God-man, Christ, *θεάνθρωπος*.

The human soul is regarded in Browning's poetry as a complexly organized, individualized divine force, destined to gravitate towards the Infinite. How is this force, with its numberless checks and counter-checks, its centripetal and centrifugal tendencies, best determined in its necessarily oblique way? How much earthly ballast must it carry, to keep it sufficiently steady, and how little, that it may not be weighed down with materialistic heaviness? How much certainty must it have of its course, and how much uncertainty, that it may shun the "torpor of assurance,"¹ and not lose the vigor which comes of a dubious and obstructed road, "which who stands upon is apt to doubt if it's indeed a road."² "Pure faith indeed," says Bishop Blougram, to Gigadibs, the literary man, "you know not what you ask! naked belief

¹ *The Ring and the Book*, The Pope, v. 1853.

² *Bishop Blougram's Apology*, v. 198, 199.

in God the Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent, sears too much the sense of conscious creatures, to be borne. It were the seeing him, no flesh shall dare. Some think, Creation's meant to show him forth: I say, it's meant to hide him all it can, and that's what all the blessed Evil's for. Its use in time is to environ us, our breath, our drop of dew, with shield enough against that sight till we can bear its stress. Under a vertical sun, the exposed brain and lidless eye and disimprisoned heart less certainly would wither up at once, than mind, confronted with the truth of Him. But time and earth case-harden us to live; the feeblest sense is trusted most: the child feels God a moment, ichors o'er the place, plays on and grows to be a man like us. With me, faith means perpetual unbelief kept quiet like the snake 'neath Michael's foot, who stands calm just because he feels it writhe."¹

There is a remarkable passage to the same effect in *Paracelsus*, in which Paracelsus expatiates on the "just so much of doubt as bade him plant a surer foot upon the sun-road."

And in *Easter Day* :

"You must mix some uncertainty
With faith, if you would have faith be."

And the good Pope in *The Ring and the Book*, alluding to the absence of true Christian soldiership, which is revealed by Pompilia's case, says: "Is it not this ignoble *confidence*, cowardly hardihood, that dulls and damps, makes the old heroism impossible? Unless . . . what whispers me of times to come? What if it be the mission of that age my death will usher into life, to *shake this torpor of assurance from our creed*, re-introduce the *doubt* discarded, bring the formidable danger back we drove long ago to the distance and the dark?"

True healthy doubt means, in Browning, that the spiritual nature is sufficiently quickened not to submit to the conclusions of the insulated intellect. It *will* reach out beyond them, and assert itself, whatever be the resistance offered by the intellect. Mere doubt, without any resistance from the intuitive, non-discursive side of our nature, is the dry-rot of the soul. The spiritual functions are "smothered in surmise." Faith is not a matter of blind belief, of slavish assent and acceptance, as many no-faith people seem to regard it. It is what Wordsworth calls it, "a passionate intuition," and springs out of quickened and refined sentiment, out of inborn instincts which are as cultivable as are any other elements of our complex nature, and which, too, may be blunted beyond a consciousness of their possession. And when one in this latter state denies the reality of faith, he is not unlike one born blind denying the reality of sight.

¹ *Bishop Blougram's Apology*, vv. 650-671.

A reiterated lesson in Browning's poetry, and one that results from his spiritual theory, is, that the present life is a tabernacle-life, and that it can be truly lived only as a tabernacle-life; for only such a life is compatible with the ever-continued aspiration and endeavour which is a condition of, and inseparable from, spiritual vitality.

Domizia, in the tragedy of *Luria*, is made to say,

"How inexhaustibly the spirit grows!
One object, she seemed erewhile born to reach
With her whole energies and die content,—
So like a wall at the world's edge it stood,
With naught beyond to live for,—is that reached?—
Already are new undream'd energies
Outgrowing under, and extending farther
To a new object;—there's another world!"

The dying John in *A Death in the Desert*, says,

"I say that man was made to grow, not stop;
That help he needed once, and needs no more.
Having grown up but an inch by, is withdrawn:
For he hath new needs, and new helps to these.
This imports solely, man should mount on each
New height in view; the help whereby he mounts,
The ladder-rung his foot has left, may fall,
Since all things suffer change save God the Truth.
Man apprehends him newly at each stage
Whereat earth's ladder drops, its service done;
And nothing shall prove twice what once was proved."

✓ Browning has given varied and beautiful expressions to this idea, throughout his poetry.

X The soul must rest in nothing this side of the infinite. If it does rest in anything, however relatively noble that thing may be, whether art, or literature, or science, or theology, even, it declines in vitality—it torpifies. However great a conquest the combatant may achieve in any of these arenas, "striding away from the huge gratitude, his club shouldered, lion-fleece round loin and flank," he must be "bound on the next new labour, height o'er height ever surmounting—destiny's decree!"¹

But this tabernacle-life, which should ever look ahead, has its claims which must not be ignored, and its standards which must not be too much above present conditions. Man must "fit to the finite his infinity" (*Sordello*, p. 203). Life may be over-spiritual as well as over-worldly. "Let us cry, 'All good things are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul!'"² The figure the poet employs in the *Ring and the Book* to illustrate the art process, may be as aptly applied to life itself—the greatest of all arts. The life-artist must know

¹ *Aristophanes' Apology*, p. 35, American ed.

² Rabbi Ben Ezra.

how to secure the proper degree of malleability in this mixture of flesh and soul. He must mingle gold with gold's alloy, and duly tempering both effect a manageable mass. There may be too little of alloy in earth-life as well as too much—too little to work the gold and fashion it, not into a ring, but ring-ward. "On the earth the broken arcs ; in the heaven a perfect round" (*Abt Vogler*). "Oh, if we draw a circle premature, heedless of far gain, greedy for quick returns of profit, sure, bad is our bargain" (*A Grammarian's Funeral*).

An Epistle containing the strange Medical Experiences of Karshish, the Arab Physician, is one of Browning's most remarkable psychological studies. It may be said to polarise the idea, so often presented in his poetry, that doubt is a condition of the vitality of faith. In this poem, the poet has treated a supposed case of a spiritual knowledge "increased beyond the fleshly faculty—heaven opened to a soul while yet on earth, earth forced on a soul's use while seeing heaven," a spiritual state, less desirable and far less favourable to the true fulfilment of the purposes of earth-life, than that expressed in the following lines from *Easter Day* :—

"A world of spirit as of sense
Was plain to him, yet not too plain,
Which he could traverse, not remain
A guest in :—else were permanent
Heaven on earth, which its gleams were meant
To sting with hunger for full light," etc.

The Epistle is a subtle representation of a soul conceived with absolute spiritual standards, while obliged to live in a world where all standards are relative and determined by the circumstances and limitations of its situation.

The spiritual life has been too distinctly revealed for fulfilling aright the purposes of earth-life, purposes which the soul, while in the flesh, must not ignore, since, in the words of Rabbi Ben Ezra, "all good things are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul." The poem may also be said to represent what is, or should be, the true spirit of the man of science. In spite of what Karshish writes, apologetically, he betrays his real attitude throughout, towards the wonderful spiritual problem involved.

It is, as many of Browning's Monologues are, a double picture—one direct, the other reflected, and the reflected one is as distinct as the direct. The composition also bears testimony to Browning's own soul-healthfulness. Though the spiritual bearing of things is the all-in-all, in his poetry, the robustness of his nature, the fullness and splendid equilibrium of his life, protect him against an inarticulate mysticism. Browning is, in the widest and deepest sense of the word, the healthiest of all living poets ; and in general constitution the most Shaksperian.

Perhaps the most comprehensive passage in Browning's poetry, expressive of his ideal of a complete man under the conditions of earthly life, is found in *Colombe's Birthday*, Act IV. Valence says of Prince Berthold,

"He gathers earth's *whole good* into his arms, standing, as man, now, stately, strong and wise—marching to fortune, not surprised by her: one great aim, like a guiding star, above—which tasks strength, wisdom, stateliness, to lift his manhood to the height that takes the prize; a prize not near—lest overlooking earth, he rashly spring to seize it—nor remote, so that he rests upon his path content: but day by day, while shimmering grows shine, and the faint circlet prophesies the orb, he sees so much as, just evolving these, the stateliness, the wisdom and the strength, to due completion, will suffice this life, and lead him at his grandest to the grave."

Browning fully recognizes, to use an expression of his *Fra Lippo Lippi*, fully recognizes "the value and significance of flesh." A healthy and well-toned spiritual life is with him the furthest removed from asceticism. To the passage from his *Rabbi Ben Ezra* already quoted, "all good things are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps soul," should be added what David sings to Saul in the poem entitled *Saul*. Was the full physical life ever more beautifully sung?

"Oh! our manhood's prime vigour! no spirit feels waste,
Not a muscle is stopped in its playing, nor sinew unbraced.
Oh, the wild joys of living! the leaping from rock up to rock,
The strong rending of boughs from the fir-tree, the cool silver shock
Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of the bear,
And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in his lair.
And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with gold dust divine,
And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher, the full draught of wine,
And the sleep in the dried river-channel where bulrushes tell
That the water was wont to go warbling so softly and well.
How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever in joy!"

Though this is said in the person of the beautiful shepherd-boy, David, whoever has lived any time with Browning, through his poetry, must be assured that it is also an expression of the poet's own experience of the glory of flesh. He has himself been an expression of the fullest physical life: and now, in his one and seventieth year, since the 7th of last May, he preserves both mind and body in a magnificent vigour. If his soul had been lodged in a sickly, rickety body, he could hardly have written these lines from *Saul*. Nor could he have written *Caliban upon Setebos*, especially the opening lines: "Will sprawl, now that the heat of day is best, flat on his belly in the pit's much mire, with elbows wide, fists clenched to prop his chin. And, while he kicks both

feet in the cool slush, and feels about his spine small eft-things course, run in and out each arm, and make him laugh: and while above his head a pompion-plant, coating the cave-top as a brow its eye, creeps down to touch and tickle hair and beard, and now a flower drops with a bee inside, and now a fruit to snap at, catch and crunch,—he looks out o'er yon sea which sunbeams cross and recross till they weave a spider-web (meshes of fire, some great fish breaks at times), and talks to his own self, howe'er he please, touching that other, whom his dam called God."

There's a grand passage in *Balaustion's Adventure: including a transcript from Euripides*, descriptive of Herakles as he returns, after his conflict with Death, leading back Alkestis, which shows the poet's sympathy with the physical. The passage is more valuable as revealing that sympathy, from the fact that it's one of his additions to Euripides:

"there stood the strength,
Happy, as always; something grave, perhaps;
The great vein-cordage on the fret-worked brow,
Black-swollen, beaded yet with battle-drops
The yellow hair o' the hero!—his big frame
A-quiver with each muscle sinking back
Into the sleepy smooth it leaped from late.
Under the great guard of one arm, there leant
A shrouded something, live and woman-like,
Propped by the heart-beats 'neath the lion-coat.
When he had finished his survey, it seemed,
The heavings of the heart began subside,
The helping breath returned, and last the smile
Shone out, all Herakles was back again,
As the words followed the saluting hand."

It is not so much the glory of flesh which Euripides represents in Herakles, as the indulgence of appetite, at a time, too, when that indulgence is made to appear the more culpable and gross.

This idea of "the value and significance of flesh," it is important to note, along with the predominant spiritual bearing of Browning's poetry. It articulates everywhere the spiritual, so to speak—makes it healthy and robust, and protects it against volatility and from running into mysticism.

Shelley's poetry is wanting in this articulation.

This much I wished to say introductory to my special subject. After reading closely all B.'s poetry, much of it many times over, I asked myself the question, What great idea or ideas do I feel to be the most strongly enforced in his Poetry? and the spontaneous reply to myself was, The idea of Personality as a quickening, regenerating power, and of Art as an intermediate agency of Personality. These two ideas I endeavour to set forth in this paper.

I. *The Idea of Personality as embodied in Browning's Poetry.*

A cardinal idea in Browning's poetry is the regeneration of men through a personality who brings fresh stuff for them to mould, interpret, and prove right,—new feeling fresh from God—whose life reteaches them what life should be, what faith is, loyalty and simplicity, all once revealed, but taught them so long since that they have but mere tradition of the fact,—truth copied falteringly from copies faint, the early traits all dropped away. (*Luria*.) The intellect plays a secondary part. Its place is behind the instinctive, spiritual antennæ which conduct along their trembling lines, fresh stuff for the intellect to stamp and keep—fresh instinct for it to translate into law.

"A people is but the attempt of many to rise to the completer life of one." (*A Soul's Tragedy*.)

Only the man who supplies new feeling fresh from God, quickens and regenerates the race, and sets it on the King's highway from which it has wandered into byways—not the man of mere intellect, of unkindled soul, that supplies only stark-naked thought. Through the former, "God stooping shows sufficient of His light for those i' the dark to rise by." (*R. and B., Pompilia*.) In him men discern "the dawn of the next nature, the new man whose will they venture in the place of theirs, and whom they trust to find them out new ways to the new heights which yet he only sees." (*Luria*.) It is by reaching towards, and doing fealty to, the greater spirit which attracts and absorbs their own, that, "trace by trace old memories reappear, old truth returns, their slow thought does its work, and all's re-known." (*Luria*.)

"Some existence like a pact
And protest against Chaos" (*Sordello*, p. 168).

... "The fullest effluence of the finest mind,
All in degree, no way diverse in kind
From minds above it, minds which, more or less
Lofty or low, move seeking to impress
Themselves on somewhat; but one mind has climbed
Step after step, by just ascent sublimed.
Thought is the soul of act, and, stage by stage,
Is soul from body still to disengage,
As tending to a freedom which rejects
Such help, and incorporeally affects
The world, producing deeds but not by deeds,
Swaying, in others, frames itself exceeds,
Assigning them the simpler tasks it used
To patiently perform till Song produced
Acts, by thoughts only, for the mind: divest
Mind of e'en Thought, and, lo, God's unexpressed
Will dawns above us!" (*Sordello*, p. 168, 169).

A dangerous tendency of civilization is that towards crystallization—towards hardened, inflexible conventionalisms which "refuse the soul its way."

Such crystallization, such conventionalisms, yield only to the dissolving power of the spiritual warmth of life-full personalities.

The quickening, regenerating power of personality is everywhere exhibited in Browning's poetry. It is emphasized in *Luria*, and in the Monologues of the Canon Caponsacchi and Pompilia, in the *Ring and the Book*; it shines out, or glints forth, in *Colombe's Birthday*, in *Saul*, in *Sordello*, and in all the Love poems. I would say, *en passant*, that Love is always treated by Browning as a *spiritual* claim; while *duty* may be only a worldly one. See especially the poem entitled *Bifurcation*. In *Balaustion's Adventure: including a transcript from Euripides*, the regenerating power of personality may be said to be the leavening idea, which the poet has introduced into the Greek play. It is entirely absent in the original. It baptizes, so to speak, the Greek play, and converts it into a Christian poem. It is the "new truth" of the poet's *Christmas Eve*.

After the mourning friends have spoken their words of consolation to the bereaved husband, the last word being, "Dead, thy wife—living, the love she left," Admetos "turned on the comfort, with no tears, this time. *He was beginning to be like his wife*. I told you of that pressure to the point, word slow pursuing word in monotone, Alkestis spoke with; so Admetos, now, solemnly bore the burden of the truth. And as the voice of him grew, gathered strength, and groaned on, and persisted to the end, we felt how deep had been descent in grief, and *with what change he came up now to light*, and left behind such littleness as tears."

And when Alkestis was brought back by Herakles, "the hero twitched the veil off: and there stood, with such fixed eyes and such slow smile, Alkestis' silent self! It was the crowning grace of that great heart to keep back joy: procrastinate the truth until the wife, who had made proof and found the husband wanting, might essay once more, hear, see, and feel him *renovated now—able to do, now, all herself had done, risen to the height of her*: so, hand in hand, the two might go together, live and die." (Compare with this the restoration of Hermione to her husband, in *The Winter's Tale*, Act V.)

A good intellect has been characterized as the chorus of Divinity. Substitute for "good intellect," "an exalted magnetic personality," and the thought is deepened. An exalted magnetic personality is the chorus of Divinity, which in the great Drama of Humanity, guides and interprets the feelings and sympathies of other souls and thus adjusts their attitudes toward the Divine. It is not the highest function of such a personality to *teach*, but rather to *inform*, in the earlier and deeper sense of the word. Whatever mere doctrine he may promulgate,

is of inferior importance to the spontaneous action of his concrete life, in which the True, the Beautiful, and the Good, breathe and live. What is born in the brain dies there, it may be; at best, it does not, and cannot of itself, lead up to the full concrete life. It is only through the spontaneous and unconscious fealty which an inferior does to a superior soul (a fealty resulting from the responsiveness of spirit to spirit), that the former is slowly and silently transformed into a more or less approximate image of the latter. The stronger personality leads the weaker on by paths which the weaker knows not, upward he leads him, though his steps be slow and vacillating. Humility, in the Christian sense, means this fealty to the higher. It doesn't mean self-abasement, self-depreciation, as it has been understood to mean, by both the Romish and the Protestant Church. Pride, in the Christian sense, is the closing of the doors of the soul to a great magnetic guest.

Browning beautifully expresses the transmission of personality in his *Saul*. But according to Browning's idea, personality cannot strictly be said to be transmitted. Personality rather evokes its *like* from other souls, which are "all in degree, no way diverse in kind."—*Sordello*, p. 168.

David has reached an advanced stage, in his symbolic song to Saul. He thinks, now, what next he shall urge "to sustain him where song had restored him?—Song filled to the verge his cup with the wine of this life, pressing all that it yields of mere fruitage, the strength and the beauty: beyond, on what fields, glean a vintage more potent and perfect to brighten the eye and bring blood to the lip, and commend them the cup they put by?" So once more the string of the harp makes response to his spirit, and he sings:

"In our flesh grows the branch of this life, in our soul it bears fruit.
 Thou hast marked the slow rise of the tree,—how its stem trembled first
 Till it passed the kid's lip, the stag's antler; then safely outburst
 The fan-branches all round; and thou mindest when these, too, in turn
 Broke a-bloom and the palm-tree seemed perfect; yet more was to learn,
 E'en the good that comes in with the palm fruit. Our dates shall we slight,
 When their juice brings a cure for all sorrow? or care for the plight
 Of the palm's self whose slow growth produced them? Not so! stem and
 branch
 Shall decay, nor be known in their place, while the palm-wine shall staunch
 Every wound of man's spirit in winter. I pour thee such wine.
 Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for! the spirit be thine!
 By the spirit, when age shall o'ercome thee, thou still shalt enjoy
 More indeed, than at first when unconscious, the life of a boy.
 Crush that life, and behold its wine running! each deed thou hast done
 Dies, revives, goes to work in the world; until e'en as the sun
 Looking down on the earth, though clouds spoil him, though tempests efface,
Can find nothing his own deed produced not, must everywhere trace
The results of his past summer-prime,—so, each ray of thy will,

*Every flash of thy passion and prowess, long over, shall thrill
Thy whole people, the countless, with ardour, till they too give forth
A like cheer to their sons: who in turn, fill the South and the North
With the radiance thy deed was the germ of."*

In the concluding lines is set forth what might be characterized as the apostolic succession of a great personality—the succession of those "who in turn fill the south and the north with the radiance his deed was the germ of."

What follows in David's song gives expression to the other mode of transmitting a great personality—that is, through records that "give unborn generations their due and their part in his being," and also to what those records owe their effectiveness, and are saved from becoming a dead letter.

"Is Saul dead? In the depth of the vale make his tomb—bid arise
A grey mountain of marble heaped four-square, till, built to the skies,
Let it mark where the great First King slumbers: whose fame would ye
know?
Up above see the rock's naked face, where the record shall go
In great characters cut by the scribe,—Such was Saul, so he did;
With the sages directing the work, by the populace chid,—
For not half, they'll affirm, is comprised there! Which fault to amend,
In the grove with his kind grows the cedar, whereon they shall spend
(See, in tablets 'tis level above them) their praise, and record
With the gold of the graver, Saul's story,—the statesman's great word
Side by side with the poet's sweet comment. The river's a-wave
With smooth paper-reeds grazing each other when prophet-winds rave:
So the pen gives unborn generations their due and their part
In thy being! Then, first of the mighty, thank God that thou art!"

What is said in this passage is applicable to the record we have of Christ's life upon earth. Christianity has only to a very limited extent been perpetuated through the letter of the New Testament. It has been perpetuated chiefly through transmissions of personalities, through apostolic succession, in a general sense, and through embodiments of his spirit in art and literature—"the statesman's great word," "the poet's sweet comment." Were it not for this transmission of the quickening power of personality, the New Testament would be, to a great extent, a dead letter. It owes its significance to the quickened spirit which is brought to the reading of it. The personality of Christ could not be, through a plastic sympathy, moulded out of the New Testament records without the aid of intermediate personalities.

The Messianic idea was not peculiar to the Jewish race—the idea of a Person, gathering up within himself, in an effective fullness and harmony, the restorative elements of humanity, which have lost their power through dispersion and consequent obscurity. There have been Messiahs of various orders and ranks, in every age,—great person-

alities that have realized to a greater or less extent (though there has been but one, the God-Man, who fully realized), the spiritual potentialities in man, that have stood upon the sharpest heights as beacons to their fellows. In the individual, the species has, as it were, been gathered up, epitomized, and intensified, and he has thus been a prophecy, and, to some extent, a fulfilment of human destiny.

"A poet must be earth's *essential* king," as Sordello asserts, and he is that by virtue of his exerting or shedding the influence of, his essential personality. "If caring not to exert the proper essence of his royalty, he, the poet, trifle malapert with accidents instead—good things assigned as heralds of a better thing behind"—he is "deposed from his kingly throne, and his glory is taken from him." Of himself Sordello says: "The power he took most pride to test, whereby all forms of life had been professed at pleasure, forms already on the earth, was but a means of power beyond, whose birth should, in its novelty, be kingship's proof. Now, whether he came near or kept aloof the several forms he longed to imitate, not there the kingship lay, he sees too late. Those forms, unalterable first as last, proved him her copier, not the protoplast of nature: what could come of being free by action to exhibit tree for tree, bird, beast, for beast and bird, or prove earth bore one veritable man or woman more? Means to an end such proofs are: what the end?"

The answer given involves the great Browning idea of the quickening power of personality: "Let essence, whatsoe'er it be, extend—never contract!"

By "essence" we must understand that which "constitutes man's self, is what *Is*," as the dying John, in *A Death in the Desert*, expresses it—that which backs the active powers and the conscious intellect, "subsisting whether they assist or no."

"Let essence, whatsoe'er it be, extend—never contract!" Sordello says. "Already you include the multitude;" that is, you gather up, in yourself, in an effective fullness and harmony, what lies scattered and ineffective in the multitude; "then let the multitude include yourself;" that is, be substantiated, essenced with yourself; "and the result were new: themselves before, the multitude turn *you*" (become yourself). "This were to live and move and have, in them, your being, and secure a diadem you should transmit (because no cycle yearns beyond itself, but on itself returns) when the full sphere in wane, the world o'erlaid long since with you, shall have in turn obeyed some orb still prouder, some displayer, still more potent than the last, of human will, and some new king depose the old."

This is a most important passage to get hold of in studying Browning.

It may almost be said to gather up Browning's philosophy of life in a nutshell.

There's a passage to the same effect in *Balaustion's Adventure*, in regard to the transmission of the poet's essence. The enthusiastic Rhodian girl, Balaustion, after she has told the play of Euripides, years after her adventure, to her four friends, Petalé, Phullis, Charopé, and Chrusion, says,

"I think I see how . . . you, I, or any one, might mould a new Admetos, new Alkestis. Ah, that brave bounty of poets, the one royal race that ever was, or will be, in this world! They give no gift that bounds itself, and ends i' the giving and the taking: theirs so breeds i' the heart and soul of the taker, so transmutes the man who only was a man before, that he grows god-like in his turn, can give—he also: share the poet's privilege, bring forth new good, new beauty from the old. As though the cup that gave the wine, gave too the god's prolific giver of the grape, that vine, was wont to find out, fawn around his footstep, springing still to bless the dearth, at bidding of a Mainad."

II. *Art as an Intermediate Agency of Personality.*

If Browning's idea of the quickening, the regeneration, the rectification of personality, through a higher personality, be fully comprehended, his idea of the great function of Art, as an intermediate agency of personality, will become plain. To emphasize the latter idea may be said to be the ultimate purpose of his masterpiece, *The Ring and the Book*. x

The complexity of the circumstances involved in the Roman murder case, adapts it admirably to the poet's purpose—namely, to exhibit the swervings of human judgment in spite of itself, and the conditions upon which the rectification of that judgment depends. +

This must be taken, however, as only the articulation, the frame-work, of the great poem. It is richer in materials, of the most varied character, than any other long poem in existence. To notice one feature of the numberless features of the poem, which might be noticed, Browning's deep and subtle insight into the genius of the Romish Church is shown in it more fully than in any other of his poems,—though special phases of that genius are distinctly exhibited in numerous poems: a remarkable one being *The Bishop orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's Church*. It is questionable whether any work of any kind has ever exhibited that genius more fully and distinctly than *The Ring and the Book* exhibits it. The reader breathes throughout the ecclesiastical atmosphere of the Eternal City.

To return from this digression, the several monologues of which the poem consists, with the exception of those of the Canon Caponsacchi,

✓ Pompilia, and the Pope, are each curious and subtle and varied exponents of the workings, without the guidance of instinct at the heart (*Sordello*, p. 179), of the prepossessed, prejudiced intellect, and of the sources of its swerving into error. What is said of the "feel after the vanished truth" in the monologue entitled *Half Rome*—the speaker being a jealous husband—will serve to characterize, in a general way, "the feel after truth" exhibited in the other monologues: "honest enough, as the way is: all the same, harbouring in the *centre of its sense* a hidden germ of failure, shy but sure, should neutralize that honesty and leave that feel for truth at fault, as the way is too. Some prepossession such as starts amiss, by but a hair's-breadth at the shoulder-blade, the arm o' the feeler, dip he ne'er so brave; and so leads waveringly, lets fall wide o' the mark his finger meant to find, and fix truth at the bottom, that deceptive speck."

† The poet could hardly have employed a more effective metaphor in which to embody the idea of mental swerving. The several monologues all going over the same ground, are artistically justified in their exhibiting, each of them, a quite distinct form of this swerving. For the ultimate purpose of the poet, it needed to be strongly emphasized. The student of the poem is amazed, long before he gets over all these monologues, at the Protean capabilities of the poet's own intellect. It takes all conceivable attitudes toward the case, and each seems to be a perfectly easy one.

These monologues all lead up to the great moral of the poem, which is explicitly set forth at the end, namely, "that our human speech is naught, our human testimony false, our fame and human estimation, words and wind. Why take the artistic way to prove so much? Because, it is the glory and good of Art, that Art remains the one way possible of speaking truth, to mouths like mine, at least. How look a brother in the face and say, Thy right is wrong, eyes hast thou yet art blind, thine ears are stuffed and stopped, despite their length: and, oh, the foolishness thou countest faith! Say this as silvery as tongue can troll—the anger of the man may be endured, the shrug, the disappointed eyes of him are not so bad to bear—but here's the plague, that all this trouble comes of telling truth, which truth, by when it reaches him, looks false, seems to be just the thing it would supplant, nor recognizable by whom it left: while falsehood would have done the work of truth. But Art, —wherein man nowise speaks to men, only to mankind,—Art may tell a truth obliquely, *do the thing shall breed the thought*," that is, bring what is *implicit* within the soul, into the right attitude to become *explicit* —bring about a silent adjustment through sympathy induced by the *concrete*; in other words, prepare the way for the perception of the

truth—"do the thing shall breed the thought, nor wrong the thought missing the mediate word;" meaning, that Art, so to speak, is the word made flesh,—is the truth, and, as Art, has nothing directly to do with the explicit. "So may you paint your picture, twice show truth, beyond mere imagery on the wall,—so, note by note, bring music from your mind, deeper than ever the Andante dived,—so write a book shall mean beyond the facts, suffice the eye and save the soul beside."

And what is the inference the poet would have us draw from this passage? It is, that the life and efficacy of Art depends on the personality of the artist, which "has informed, transpierced, thridded and so thrown fast the facts else free, as right through ring and ring runs the djereed and binds the loose, one bar without a break."¹ And it is really this fusion of the artist's soul, which kindles, quickens, *informs* those who contemplate, respond to, reproduce sympathetically within themselves the greater spirit which attracts and absorbs their own. The work of Art is apocalyptic of the artist's own personality. It *cannot* be impersonal. As is the temper of his spirit, so is, *must* be, the temper of his Art product.² *Titus Andronicus* could not have been written by Shakspeare. Even if he had written it as a burlesque of such a play as Marlow's *Jew of Malta*, he could not have avoided some revelation of that sense of moral proportion which is omnipresent in his Plays. But there's no Shakspeare in *Titus Andronicus*. Are we not certain of what manner of man Shakspeare was from his Works (notwithstanding that critics are ever asserting their impersonality)—far more certain than if his biography had been written by one who knew him all his life, and sustained to him the most intimate relations? We know Shakspeare, or, he *can* be known, if the requisite conditions are met, better, perhaps, than any other great author that ever lived—know, in the deepest sense of the word, in a sense other than that in which we know Dr. Johnson, through Boswell's Biography. The moral proportion which is so signal a characteristic of his Plays could not have been imparted to them by the conscious intellect. It was *shed* from his spiritual constitution. /x

By "speaking truth" in Art's way, Browning means, inducing a right *attitude* toward, a full and free *sympathy* with, the True, which is a far more important and effective way of speaking truth than delivering truth *in re*. A work of Art, worthy of the name, need not be true to fact, but must be true in its spiritual attitude, and being thus true, it will tend to induce a corresponding attitude in those who do fealty to

¹ *The Ring and the Book.*

² "And long it was not after, when I was confirmed in this opinion, that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem."—Milton's Apology for Smeectymnus.

it It will have the influence, though in an inferior degree, it may be, of a magnetic personality. Personality is the ultimate source of spiritual quickening and adjustment. Literature and all forms of Art are but the intermediate agencies of personalities. The artist cannot be separated from his art. As is the artist so *must* be his art. The *aura*, so to speak, of a great work of Art, must come from the artist's own personality. The spiritual worth of Shakspeare's *Winter's Tale* is not at all impaired by the fact that Bohemia is made a maritime country, that Whitsun pastorals and Christian burial, and numerous other features of Shakspeare's own age, are introduced into pagan times, that Queen Hermione speaks of herself as a daughter of the Emperor of Russia, that her statue is represented as executed by Julio Romano, an Italian painter of the 16th century, that a puritan sings psalms to hornpipes, and, to crown all, that messengers are sent to consult the oracle of Apollo, at Delphi, which is represented as an island! All this jumble, this gallimaufry, I say, does not impair the spiritual worth of the play. As an Art-product, it invites a rectified attitude toward the True and the Sweet.

If we look at the letter of the trial scene in *The Merchant of Venice*, it borders on the absurd; but if we look at its spirit, we see the Shaksperian attitude of soul which makes for righteousness, for the righteousness which is inherent in the moral constitution of the universe.

The inmost, secretest life of Shakspeare's Plays came from the personality, the inmost, secretest life, of the man Shakspeare. We might, with the most alert sagacity, note and tabulate and aggregate his myriad phenomenal merits as a dramatic writer, but we might still be very far from that something back of them all, or rather that *immanent* something, that mystery of personality, that microcosmos, that "inmost centre, where truth abides in fullness," as Browning makes Paracelsus characterize it, "constituting man's self, is what Is," as he makes the dying John characterize it, in *A Death in the Desert*, that "innermost of the inmost, most interior of the interne," as Mrs. Browning characterizes it, "the hidden Soul," as Dallas characterizes it, which is projected into, and constitutes the soul of, the Plays, and which is reached through an unconscious and mystic sympathy on the part of him who habitually communes with and does fealty to them. That personality, that living force, coöperated spontaneously and unconsciously with the conscious powers, in the creative process; and when we enter into a sympathetic communion with the concrete result of that creative process, our own mysterious personalities, being essentially *identical* with, though less quickened than, Shakspeare's, respond, *though it may be but feebly*, to his. This response is the highest result

of the study of Shakspeare's works. The dramas are really means to this end.

It is a significant fact that Shaksperian critics and editors, for nearly two centuries, have been a *genus irritabile*, to which *genus* Shakspeare himself certainly did not belong. The explanation may partly be, that they have been too much occupied with the *letter*, and have fretted their nerves in angry dispute about readings and interpretations; as theologians have done in their study of the sacred records, instead of endeavouring to reach, through the letter, the personality of which the letter is but a manifestation more or less imperfect. To *know* a personality is, of course, a spiritual knowledge—the result of sympathy, that is, spiritual responsiveness. Intellectually it is but little more important to know one rather than another personality. The highest worth of all great works of genius is due to the fact that they are apocalyptic of great personalities.

Art says, as the Divine Person said, whose personality and the personalities fashioned after it, have transformed and moulded the ages, "Follow me!" Deep was the meaning wrapt up in this command: it was, Do as I do, live as I live, not from an intellectual perception of the principles involved in my life, but through a full sympathy, through the awakening, vitalizing, actuating power of the incarnate Word.

Art also says, as did the voice from the wilderness, inadequately translated, "*Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" (Μετανοείτε ἡγγικε γὰρ ἡ Βασιλεία τῶν οὐρανῶν.) Rather, be transformed, or, as De Quincey puts it, "Wheel into a new centre your spiritual system; *geocentric* has that system been up to this hour—that is, having earth and the earthly for its starting-point; henceforward make it *heliocentric* (that is, with the sun, or the heavenly, for its principle of motion)."

The poetry of Browning everywhere says this, and says it more emphatically than that of any other poet in our literature. It says everywhere, that not through knowledge, not through a sharpened intellect, but through repentance, in the deeper sense to which I have just alluded, through conversion, through wheeling into a new centre its spiritual system, the soul attains to saving truth. Salvation with him means that revelation of the soul to itself, that awakening, quickening, actuating, attitude-adjusting, of the soul, which sets it gravitating toward the Divine.

Browning's idea of Conversion is, perhaps, most distinctly expressed in a passage in the Monologue of the Canon Caponsacchi, in *The Ring and the Book*, wherein he sets forth the circumstances under which his

soul was wheeled into a new centre, after a life of dalliance and elegant folly, and made aware of "the marvellous dower of the life it was gifted and filled with." He has been telling the judges, before whom he has been summoned, the story of the letters forged by Guido to entrap him and Pompilia, and of his having seen "right through the thing that tried to pass for truth and solid, not an empty lie." The conclusion and the resolve he comes to, are expressed in the soliloquy which he repeats to the judges, as having uttered at the time: "So, he not only forged the words for her but words for me, made letters he called mine: what I sent, he retained, gave these in place, all by the mistress messenger! As I recognized her, at potency of truth, so she, by the crystalline soul, knew me, never mistook the signs. Enough of this—let the wraith go to nothingness again, here is the orb, have only thought for her!" What follows admits us to the very *heart* of Browning's poetry—admits us to the great Idea which is almost, in these days, strange to say, peculiarly his—which no other poet, certainly, of this intellectual, analytic, scientific age, with its "patent, truth-extracting processes," has brought out with the same degree of distinctness—the great Idea which may be variously characterized as that of soul-kindling, soul-quickening, adjustment of soul-attitude, regeneration, conversion, through *personality*—a kindling, quickening, adjustment, regeneration, conversion, in which *thought* is not even a coefficient. As expressed in *Sordello*, "Divest mind of e'en thought, and, lo, God's unexpressed will dawns above us!" (p. 169). "Thought?" the Canon goes on to say, "Thought? nay, Sirs, what shall follow was not thought: I have thought sometimes, and thought long and hard. I have stood before, gone round a serious thing, tasked my whole mind to touch and clasp it close, . . . God and man, and what duty I owe both,—I dare to say I have confronted these in thought: but no such faculty helped here. I put forth no thought,—powerless, all that night I paced the city: it was the first Spring. By the *invasion I lay passive to*, in rushed new things, the old were rapt away; alike abolished—the imprisonment of the outside air, the inside weight o' the world that pulled me down. Death meant, to spurn the ground, soar to the sky,—die well and you do that. The very immolation made the bliss; death was the heart of life, and all the harm my folly had crouched to avoid, now proved a veil hiding all gain my wisdom strove to grasp. . . . Into another state, under new rule I knew myself was passing swift and sure; whereof the initiatory pang approached, felicitous annoy, as bitter-sweet as when the virgin band, the victors chaste, feel at the end the earthy garments drop, *and rise with something of a rosy shame into immortal nakedness: so I lay, and let come the proper throe would thrill into the ecstasy and out-*

throb pain. 'T' the gray of the dawn it was I found myself facing the pillared front o' the Pieve—mine, my church: it seemed to say for the first time, 'But am not I the Bride, the mystic love o' the Lamb, who took thy plighted troth, my priest, to fold thy warm heart on my heart of stone and freeze thee nor unfasten any more? This is a fleshly woman,—let the free bestow their life blood, thou art pulseless now!' . . . Now, when I found out first that life and death are means to an end, that passion uses both, indubitably mistress of the man whose form of worship is self-sacrifice—now, from the stone lungs sighed the scrannel voice, 'Leave that live passion, come be dead with me!' As if, i' the fabled garden, I had gone on great adventure, plucked in ignorance hedge-fruit, and feasted to satiety, laughing at such high fame for hips and haws, and scorned the achievement: then come all at once o' the prize o' the place, the thing of perfect gold, the apple's self: and, scarce my eye on that, was 'ware as well of the seven-fold dragon's watch. Sirs, I obeyed.¹ Obedience was too strange,—this new thing that had been *struck into me by the look of the lady*,—to dare disobey the first authoritative word. 'Twas God's. I had been *lifted to the level of her*, could take such sounds into my sense. I said, 'We two are cognizant o' the Master now; it is she bids me bow the head: how true, I am a priest! I see the function here; I thought the other way self-sacrifice: this is the true, seals up the perfect sum. I pay it, sit down, silently obey.'

Numerous and varied expressions of the idea of conversion set forth in this passage, occur in Browning's poetry, evidencing his deep sense of this great and indispensable condition of soul-life, of being born anew (or from above, as it should be rendered in the Gospel, *ἀνωθεν*, that is, through the agency of a higher personality), in order to see the kingdom of God—evidencing his conviction that "the kingdom of God cometh not with observation: for lo! the kingdom of God is within you." In the poem entitled *Cristina*, he says, or the speaker is made to say,

"Oh we're sunk enough here, God knows! but not quite so sunk that moments, Sure tho' seldom, are denied us, when the spirit's true endowments Stand out plainly from its false ones, and apprise it if pursuing Or the right way or the wrong way, to its triumph or undoing. There are flashes struck from midnights, there are fire-flames noondays kindle, Whereby piled-up honours perish, whereby swollen ambitions dwindle, While just this or that poor impulse, which for once had play unstified, Seems the sole work of a life-time that away the rest have trifled."

And again, when the Pope in *The Ring and the Book* has come to the decision to sign the death-warrant of Guido and his accomplices, he

¹ He means the entreaty of Pompilia, to rescue her from her husband, Count Guido Franceschini, and take her to Rome, to the Comparini, her putative parents.

says: "For the main criminal I have no hope except in such a *suddenness of fate*. I stood at Naples once, a night so dark I could have scarce conjectured there was earth anywhere, sky or sea or world at all: but the night's black was burst through by a blaze—thunder struck blow on blow, earth groaned and bore, through her whole length of mountain visible: there lay the city thick and plain with spires, and, like a ghost disshrouded, white the sea. *So may the truth be flashed out by one blow, and Guido see, one instant, and be saved.* Else I avert my face, nor follow him into that sad obscure sequestered state where God *unmakes but to remake* the soul he else made first in vain; which must not be. Enough, for I may die this very night; and how should I dare die, this man let live? Carry this forthwith to the Governor!"

Browning is the most essentially Christian of living poets. Religion with him is, indeed, the all-in-all; but not any particular form of it as a finality. This is not a world for finalities of any kind, as he constantly teaches us: it is a world of broken arcs, not of perfect rounds. Formulations of some kind he would, no doubt, admit there must be, as in everything else; but with him all formulations and tabulations of beliefs, especially such as "make square to a finite eye the circle of infinity,"¹ are, at the best, only *provisional*, and, at the worst, lead to spiritual standstill, spiritual torpor, "a ghastly smooth life, dead at heart."² The essential nature of Christianity is contrary to special prescription, do this or do that, believe this or believe that. Christ gave no recipes. Christianity is with Browning, and this he sets forth again and again, a *life*, quickened and motived and nourished by the Personality of Christ. And all that he says of this Personality can be accepted by every Christian, whatever theological view he may entertain of Christ. Christ's teachings he regards but as *incidents* of that Personality, and the records we have of his sayings and doings, but a fragment, a somewhat distorted one, it may be, out of which we must, by a mystic and plastic sympathy, aided by the Christ spirit which is immanent in the Christian world, mould the Personality, and do fealty to it. The Christian must endeavour to be able to say, with the dying John, in Browning's *Death in the Desert*, "To me that story,—ay, that Life and Death of which I wrote 'it was'—to me, it is."

If there were any elements in Christ's nature not potentially in our own, those elements would not be of any service to us. Our own natures can be quickened only by what is identical with them.

The poem entitled *Christmas Eve* contains the fullest and most explicit expression, in Browning, of his idea of the personality of Christ as *being the all-in-all of Christianity*.

¹ *Christmas Eve*.

² Easter Day, 17th v. from end.

"the truth in God's breast
 Lies trace for trace upon ours impressed :
 Though He is so bright and we so dim,
 We are made in His image to witness Him :
 And were no eye in us to tell,
 Instructed by no inner sense,
 The light of Heaven from the dark of Hell,
 That light would want its evidence,—
 Though Justice, Good, and Truth, were still
 Divine, if, by some demon's will,
 Hatred and wrong had been proclaimed
 Law through the worlds, and Right misnamed,
 No mere exposition of morality
 Made or in part or in totality,
 Should win you to give it worship, therefore :
 And if no better proof you will care for,
 —Whom do you count the worst man upon earth ?
 Be sure, he knows, in his conscience, more
 Of what Right is, than arrives at birth
 In the best man's acts that we bow before :
 And thence I conclude that the real God-function
 Is to furnish a motive and injunction
 For practising what we know already.
 And such an injunction and such a motive
 As the God in Christ, do you waive, and 'heady,
 High-minded,' hang your tablet votive
 Outside the fane on a finger-post ?
 Morality to the uttermost,
 Supreme in Christ as we all confess,
 Why need *we* prove would avail no jot
 To make Him God, if God he were not ?
 Where is the point where Himself lays stress ?
 Does the precept run ' Believe in Good,
 In Justice, Truth, now understood
 For the first time ' ?—or ' Believe in ME,
 Who lived and died, yet essentially
 Am Lord of Life ' ?¹ Whoever can take
 The same to his heart and for mere love's sake
 Conceive of the love,—that man obtains
 A new truth ; no conviction gains
 Of an old one only, made intense
 By a fresh appeal to his faded sense."

If all Christendom could take this remarkable poem of *Christmas Eve* to its heart, its tolerance, its Catholic spirit, and, more than all, the loyalty it exhibits to the Personality who essentially is Lord of Life, what a revolution it would undergo ! and what a mass of dogmatic and polemic theology would become utterly obsolete ! The most remarkable thing, perhaps, about the vast body of Christian theology which has

¹ "Subsists no law of life outside of life."

* * * * *

"The Christ himself had been no Lawgiver,
 Unless he had given the *life*, too, with the law."

Mrs. Browning's *Aurora Leigh*.

been developed during the eighteen centuries which have elapsed since Christ was in the flesh, is, that it is occupied so largely, it might almost be said, exclusively, with what Christ and his disciples *taught*, and with fierce discussions about the manifold meanings which have been ingeniously extorted from the imperfect *record* of what he taught. British museum libraries of polemics have been written in defence of what Christ himself would have been indifferent to, and written with an animosity towards opponents which has been crystallized in a phrase now applied in a general way to any intense hate—*Odium Theologicum*.

If the significance of Christ's mission, or a large part of it, is to be estimated by his teachings, from those teachings important deductions must be made, as many of them had been delivered long before his time. As a mere teacher or moralist, he could not have maintained any important place in history.

Browning has something to say on this point, in this same poem of *Christmas Eve*—

"Truth's atmosphere may grow mephitic
When Papist struggles with Dissenter,
Impregnating its pristine clarity,
—One, by his daily fare's vulgarity,
Its gust of broken meat and garlic ;
—One, by his soul's too-much presuming
To turn the frankincense's fuming
And vapors of the candle starlike
Into the cloud her wings she buoys on.
Each that thus sets the pure air seething,
May poison it for healthy breathing—
But the Critic leaves no air to poison ;
Pumps out by a ruthless ingenuity
Atom by atom, and leaves you—vacuity.
Thus much of Christ, does he reject ?
And what retain ? His intellect ?
What is it I must reverence duly ?
Poor intellect for worship, truly,
Which tells me simply what was told
(If mere morality, bereft
Of the God in Christ, be all that's left)
Elsewhere by voices manifold ;
With this advantage, that the stater
Made nowise the important stumble
Of adding, he, the sage and humble,
Was also one with the Creator."

Browning's poetry is instinct with the essence of Christianity—the *life* of Christ. There is no other poetry, there is no writing of any form, in this age, which so emphasizes the fact (and it's the most consoling of all facts connected with the Christian religion), that the *Personality*, Jesus Christ, is the impregnable fortress of Christianity. *Whatever* assaults and inroads may be made upon the original records

by Göttingen professors, upon the august fabric of the Church, with its creeds and dogmas, and formularies, and paraphernalia, this fortress will stand forever, and mankind will forever seek and find refuge in it.

The poem entitled *Cleon* bears the intimation (there's nothing directly expressed thereupon), that Christianity is something distinct from, and beyond, whatever the highest civilization of the world, the civilization of Greece, attained to before Christ. Through him the world obtained "a new truth—no conviction gained of an old one merely, made intense by a fresh appeal to the faded sense."

Cleon, the poet, writes to Protos in his Tyranny (that is, in the Greek sense, Sovereignty). Cleon must be understood as representing the ripe, composite result, as an individual, of what constituted the glory of Greece—her poetry, sculpture, architecture, painting, and music, and also her philosophy. He acknowledges the gifts which the King has lavished upon him. By these gifts we are to understand the munificent national patronage accorded to the arts. "The master of thy galley still unlades gift after gift; they block my court at last and pile themselves along its portico royal with sunset, like a thought of thee."

By the slave women that are among the gifts sent to Cleon, seems to be indicated the degradation of the spiritual by its subjection to earthly ideals, as were the ideals of Greek art. This is more particularly indicated by the one white she-slave, the lyric woman, whom further on in his letter, Cleon promises the King he will make narrate (in lyric song we must suppose) his fortunes, speak his great words, and describe his royal face.

He continues, that in such an act of love,—the bestowal of princely gifts upon him whose song gives life its joy,—men shall remark the King's recognition of the use of life—that his spirit is equal to more than merely to help on life in straight ways, broad enough for vulgar souls, by ruling and the rest. He ascribes to the King, in the building of his tower (and by this must be understood the building up of his own selfhood), a higher motive than work for mere work's sake,—that higher motive being, the luring hope of some *eventual rest* atop of it (the tower), whence, all the tumult of the building hushed, the first of men may look out to the east.¹

¹ Tennyson uses a similar figure in *The Two Voices*. The speaker, who is meditating whether "to be or not to be," says:

"Were this not well, to bide mine hour,
Though watching from a ruined tower
How grows the day of human power."

The ruined tower is his own dilapidated self-hood, whence he takes his outlook upon the world.

By the eventual rest atop of the tower, is indicated the aim of the Greek civilization, to reach a calm within the finite, while the soul is constituted and destined to gravitate forever towards the infinite—to "force our straitened sphere . . . display completely here the mastery another life should learn" (*Sordello*, p. 23). The eventual rest in this world is not the Christian ideal. Earth-life, whatever its reach, and whatever its grasp, is to the Christian a broken arc, not a perfect round.

Cleon goes on to recount his accomplishments in the arts, and what he has done in philosophy, in reply to the first requirement of Protos's letter, Protos, as it appears, having heard of, and wonderingly enumerated, the great things Cleon has effected; and he has written to know the truth of the report. Cleon replies, that the epos on the King's hundred plates of gold is his, and his the little chaunt so sure to rise from every fishing-bark when, lights at prow, the seamen haul their nets; that the image of the sun-god on the light-house men turn from the sun's self to see, is his; that the Poecile, o'er-storied its whole length with painting, is his, too; that he knows the true proportions of man and woman, not observed before; that he has written three books on the soul, proving absurd all written hitherto, and putting us to ignorance again; that in music he has combined the moods, inventing one; that, in brief, all arts are his, and so known and recognized. At this he writes the King to marvel not. We of these latter days, he says, being more *composite*, appear not so great as our forerunners who, in their simple way, were greater in a certain single direction, than we; but our composite way is greater. This life of men on earth, this sequence of the soul's achievements here, he finds reason to believe, was intended to be viewed eventually as a great whole, the individual soul being only a factor toward the realization of this great whole—toward spelling out, so to speak, Zeus's idea in the race. Those divine men of old, he goes on to say, reached each at one point, the outside verge that rounds our faculty, and where they reached, who could do more than reach? I have not chanted, he says, verse like Homer's, nor swept string like Terpander, nor carved and painted men like Phidias and his friend; I am not great as they are, point by point; but I have entered into sympathy with these four, running these into one soul, who, separate, ignored each other's arts. The wild flower was the larger—I have dashed rose-blood upon its petals, pricked its cup's honey with wine, and driven its seed to fruit, and show a better flower, if not so large.

And now he comes to the important questions in the King's letter—whether he, the poet, his soul thus in men's hearts, has not attained the very crown and proper end of life—whether, now life closeth up, he *faces death* with success in his right hand,—whether he fears death less

than he, the King, does himself, the fortunate of men, who assigns the reason for thinking that he does that he, the poet, leaves much behind, his life stays in the poems men shall sing, the pictures men shall study; while the King's life, complete and whole now in its power and joy, dies altogether with his brain and arm, as *he* leaves not behind, as the poet does, works of art embodying the essence of his life which, through those works, will pass into the lives of men of all succeeding times. Cleon replies that if in the morning of philosophy, the King, with the light now in him, could have looked on all earth's tenantry, from worm to bird, ere man appeared, and if Zeus had questioned him whether he would improve on it, do more for visible creatures than was done, he would have answered, "Ay, by making each grow conscious in himself: all's perfect else, life's mechanics can no further go, and all this joy in natural life is put, like fire from off thy fingers into each, so exquisitely perfect is the same. But 'tis pure fire—and they mere matter are; it has *them*, not they *it*: and so I choose, for man, that a third thing shall stand apart from both, a quality arise within the soul, which, intro-active, made to supervise and feel the force it has, may view itself and so be happy. But it is this quality, Cleon continues, which makes man a failure. This sense of sense, this spirit consciousness, grew the only life worth calling life, the pleasure-house, watch-tower, and treasure-fortress of the soul, which whole surrounding flats of natural life seemed only fit to yield subsistence to; a tower that crowns a country. But alas! the soul now climbs it just to perish there, for thence we have discovered that there's a world of capability for joy, spread round about us, meant for us, inviting us; and still the soul craves all, and still the flesh replies, "Take no jot more than ere you climbed the tower to look abroad! Nay, so much less, as that fatigue has brought deduction to it." After expatiating on this sad state of man, he arrives at the same conclusion as the King in his letter: "I agree in sum, O King, with thy profound discouragement, who seest the wider but to sigh the more. Most progress is most failure! thou sayest well."

And now he takes up the last point of the King's letter, that he, the King, holds joy not impossible to one with artist-gifts, who leaves behind living works. Looking over the sea, as he writes, he says, "Yon rower with the moulded muscles there, lowering the sail, is nearer it than I." He presents with clearness, and with rigid logic, the *dilemma* of the growing soul; shows the vanity of living in works left behind, and in the memory of posterity, while he, the feeling, thinking, acting man, shall sleep in his urn. The horror of the thought makes him dare imagine at times some future state

unlimited in capability for joy, as this is in *desire* for joy. But no! Zeus has not yet revealed such a state; and alas! he must have done so were it possible!

He concludes, "Live long and happy, and in that thought die, glad for what was! Farewell." And then, as a matter of minor importance, he informs the King, in a postscript, that he cannot tell his messenger aright where to deliver what he bears to one called Paulus. Protos, it must be understood, having heard of the fame of Paul, and being perplexed in the extreme, has written the great apostle to know of his doctrine. But Cleon writes that it is vain to suppose that a mere barbarian Jew, one circumcised, hath access to a secret which is shut from them, and that the King wrongs their philosophy in stooping to inquire of such an one. "Oh, he finds adherents, who does not. Certain slaves who touched on this same isle, preached him and Christ, and, as he gathered from a bystander, their doctrines could be held by no sane man."

There is a quiet beauty about this poem which must insinuate itself into the feelings of every reader. In tone it resembles the *Epistle of Karshish, the Arab physician*. The verse of both poems is very beautiful. No one can read these two poems, and *Bishop Blougram's Apology*, and *The Bishop orders his Tomb at St. Praxed's Church*, and not admit that Browning is a master of blank verse in its most difficult form—a form far more difficult than that of the epic blank verse of Milton, or the Idyllic blank verse of Tennyson, argumentative and freighted with thought, and, at the same time, almost chatty, as it is, and bearing in its course exquisitely poetical conceptions. The same may be said of much of the verse of *The Ring and the Book*, especially that of the monologues of the Canon Caponsacchi, Pompilia, the Pope, and Count Guido Franceschini. But this by the way.

Cleon belongs to a grand group of poems, in which Browning shows himself to be, as I've said, the most essentially Christian of living poets—the poet who, more emphatically than any of his contemporaries have done, has enforced the importance, the indispensableness of a new birth, the being born from above (*ἀνωθεν*) as the condition not only of soul vitality and progress, but also of intellectual rectitude. In this group of poems are embodied the profoundest principles of education—principles which it behoves the present generation of educators to look well to. The acquisition of knowledge is a good thing, the sharpening of the intellect is a good thing, the cultivation of philosophy is a good thing; but there's something of infinitely more importance than all these—it *is*, the rectification, the adjustment, through that mysterious operation *we call sympathy*, of the unconscious personality, the hidden soul, which

co-operates with the active powers, with the conscious intellect, and, as this unconscious personality is rectified or unrectified, determines the active powers, the conscious intellect, for righteousness or unrighteousness.

The attentive reader of Browning's poetry must soon discover how remarkably homogeneous it is in spirit. There are many authors, and great authors too, the reading of whose collected works gives the impression of their having "tried their hand" at many things. No such impression is derivable from the voluminous poetry of Browning. Wide as is its range, one great and homogeneous spirit pervades and animates it all, from the earliest to the latest. No other living poet gives so decided an assurance of having a *burden* to deliver. An appropriate general title to his works would be, "The Burden of Robert Browning to the 19th century." His earliest poems are the least articulate, but there can be no question about their *attitude*. We know in what direction the poet has set his face—what his philosophy of life is, what soul-life means with him, what regeneration means, what edification means in its deepest sense of building up within us the spiritual temple. And if he had left this world after writing no more than those poems of his youth, *Pauline* and *Paracelsus*, a very fair *ex-pede-Herculem* estimate might have been made of the possibilities which he has since so grandly realized.

SCRAPS.

Bibliography. Personal Notice. 1845-57. 'Memoirs of the Life of Anna Jameson . . . by her niece Gerardine Macpherson . . . Longmans, 1878.' After notices of Mrs. Jameson's making the acquaintance of Miss Barrett in 1842,—Mrs. J. was staying 'at 51, Wimpole St., next door to the house in which Miss Barrett resided,' p. 190,—and mentions of E. B. B. on p. 191, 194, 205, 217, 219, Mrs. Macpherson notes, on p. 229, the ripening of her aunt's friendship with E. B. B. and her offer to take the poetess abroad with her in the autumn of 1844; but the offer was gratefully and gracefully declined, and "when the moment of departure came, another little note of farewell arrived, deploring the writer's inability to come in person and bid her friend good-bye, as she was 'forced to be satisfied with the sofa and silence' [and R. B.] . . . With these communications so fresh in her mind, having newly parted indeed from this invalid 'satisfied with the sofa and silence,' it may be supposed what was Mrs. Jameson's astonishment when, shortly after we reached Paris, she received another little letter, telling her that Robert Browning had just arrived from London, *en route* for Italy with his wife—the same E. B. B. who had so recently taken farewell of her. My aunt's surprise was something almost comical, so startling and entirely unexpected was the news. But it was as delightful as unexpected, and gave an excitement the more to our journey, which, to one of us at least [Mrs. M.], was already like a journey into the old world of enchantment—a revival of fairyland.

"Mrs. Jameson lost no time in going to the hotel where her friends were staying, and induced them to come at once to the quiet *pension* in the Rue Ville d'Evêque, where she herself was living. The result of all which was that, after about a fortnight spent together in Paris, the whole party travelled leisurely south to the Brownings' destination, Pisa . . . the temptation is great to linger upon the memories of a journey so enchanting, made in the fairest days of youth, and with such companionship. The loves of the poets could not have been put into more delightful reality before the eyes of the dazzled and enthusiastic beholder; but the recollections have been rendered sacred by death as well as by love.

"I may, however, permit myself to recall one scene among many of this wonderful journey. We rested for a couple of days at Avignon, the route to Italy being then much less direct and expeditious, though I think much more delightful, than now; and while there we made a little expedition, a poetical pilgrimage, to Vaucluse. There, at the very source of the '*chiare, fresche e dolci acque*,' Mr. Browning took his wife up in his arms, and, carrying her across through the shallow curling waters, seated her on a rock that rose throne-like in the middle of the stream.¹ Thus love and poetry took a new possession of the spot immortalised by Petrarch's loving fancy" . . . so far as Mrs. Browning's health was concerned: 'I have been gaining strength every week since I left England (she writes), and Mrs. Jameson, who met us in Paris, and travelled with us, called me, at the end of six weeks, notwithstanding all the emotion and fatigue, rather transformed than improved.' She has now gone to Florence.

"Three out of those six weeks were spent by the travelling companions together in Pisa—a period to which both of the survivors² must look back with a tender reverent memory, with associations of the past hardly to be breathed aloud, but remembered within one's soul as a golden oasis in existence (p. 232). . . . The poet-pair, who were our closest associates, added all that was wanted to the laborious happiness of this time. Mrs. Browning could take no active part in her friend's pursuits, but who shall say of what value was her earnest and unfailing sympathy? (p. 234).

p. 247. "After Easter [1847] Mrs. Jameson left Rome and travelled north by Florence, where she found the Brownings . . . (on p. 263, Mrs. Br.'s motherhood is alluded to, in 1849). p. 295: Mrs. Jameson went to Paris [autumn, 1856], where she found the Brownings . . . p. 302: During this winter [1857-8] Mrs. Jameson . . . continued her labours in Florence, where she passed two months, although ill the greater portion of the time, her one great compensation being the society of her dear friends Mr. and Mrs. Browning, and one or two other persons living in Florence, to whom she was warmly attached."—Mrs. Fitz-Gerald lent me the book.

Bibliography. 1877. 'Islington Gazette,' Nov. 9. Report of the weekly meeting of the Offord-Road Young Men's Christian Debating Society, on the Wednesday previous, whereat 'Mr. W. G. Kingsland opened a discussion on the subject, "The poems of Robert Browning are of a higher order than those of Alfred Tennyson." It is in virtue of Br.'s profundity of thought and suggestion, that I claim for him the first place in the rank of modern poets.' . . . 'The motion was opposed by Mr. H. Beamish, who . . . argued that Br.'s mystery of expression, his ambiguous language, and the difficulty of getting at his meaning, placed him on a lower level than Tennyson, the essential quality of a great poet consisting in his simplicity and clearness' . . .

¹ *Index* as "Browning, Robert . . . his practical poetry at Vaucluse, 231."

² Mrs. Macpherson died before her book was published.

XVI.

THE RELIGIOUS TEACHING OF BROWNING.

BY DOROTHEA BEALE.

(Read at the 10th Meeting of the Browning Society, on Friday, October 27, 1882.)

THERE are those who judge others, as the world does, by their faults and failures, who seem to think that in these the true character comes out; and there are those who, knowing that they have within themselves a high ideal, of which they fail, believe that the true character comes out in the best that we know of any one.

"What I aspired to be,
And was not, comforts me."

So they judge a thinker by his noblest works. Wordsworth by his *Ode to Duty* rather than by *The Idiot Boy*; Milton by his *Areopagitica* rather than his *Divorce* tracts; Shakspeare by his *Hamlet*. Thus we love Browning for his great thoughts, for his high enthusiasm, for his faith in God, and man and woman. We come to him for his philosophy, and we care not to dwell upon the shortcomings, of which he is doubtless more conscious than we are, upon the superficial faults, which every one can see; rather would we bring to light the hidden treasures. We thank him for the comfort and strength he has given us. We know that he has enriched our sympathies, cheered us under failure and disappointment, and helped us to understand the meaning of life. But I think what draws most of us to him is this: we are struggling with the waves of doubt—storm-tost and ready to sink—and as we look at him, we see him with a smile on his face, calmly floating, his head above the waves, his body supported therein. He quietly tells us our safety is to do the same. He¹ teaches that to bury ourselves in the things of earth is death; to try to rise out of the conditions in which God has placed us may end in a Soul's Tragedy; to use the visible to sustain and teach, this is our wisdom during our life here, ere the disembodied Psyche can float up into more ethereal regions, and revel in the sunlight; and so he conciliates philosophy and religion.

He is ever cheerful and consoling, so that we turn to him in our

¹ See *Fifine*.

trouble. Are we oppressed with pessimism, discontented with all that is? He tells us this is the witness to our own nobility, and to a future immortality.

"Progress is man's distinctive mark alone,
Not God's, and not the beasts': God is, they are,
Man partly is, and wholly hopes to be." (*Death in the Desert.*)

"'Tis not what Man Does which exalts him, but what man Would do." (*Saul*)

"for mankind springs
Salvation by each hindrance interposed;
They climb." (*Sordello.*)

"They are perfect—how else? they shall never change;
We are faulty—why not? we have time in store." (*Pictures in Florence.*)

"He said, 'What's time? Leave Now for dogs and apes!
Man has Forever.'" (*Grammarian's Funeral.*)

Do we cry out that we are tired of battling with the waves, and does it seem a weary quest ever to be following the light, never reaching it? He tells us that gradual development is the condition of our spiritual health, *i. e.* of life.

"——this gift of truth
Once grasped, were this our soul's gain safe, and sure
To prosper as the body's gain is wont,—
Why man's probation would conclude."

Do we complain of error? He tells us this is partial truth, that the imperfect must precede the perfect, that disappointment and darkness is an earnest of real success.

"God's gift was that man should conceive of truth
And yearn to gain it, catching at mistake." (*Death in the Desert.*)

"Imperfection means perfection hid,
Reserved in part, to grace the after time." (*Cleon.*)

"And what is our failure here but a triumph's evidence
For the fulness of the days? Have we withered or agonized?
Why else was the pause prolonged, but that singing might issue thence?
Why rushed the discords in, but that harmony should be prized?"
(*Abt Vogler.*)

"If I stoop
Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
It is but for a time; I press God's lamp
Close to my breast; its splendour soon or late
Will pierce the gloom." (*Paracelsus.*)

"Love, wrong, and pain, what see I else around?
Yea, and the resurrection and uprise
To the right hand of the throne.

* * * * *
If ye demur, this judgment on your head—
Never to reach the ultimate, angels' law;
There, where law, life, joy, impulse are one thing."
(*Death in the Desert.*)

Do we doubt the goodness of God when we see some hideous evil? He tells us that only through the contest with evil can man pass to power and glory.

"Why comes temptation, but for man to meet
And master, and make crouch beneath his foot;
And so be pedestalled in triumph? Pray,
'Lead us into no such temptations, Lord'?
Yea, but, O thou, whose servants are the bold,
Lead such temptations by the head and hair,
Reluctant dragons, up to who dares fight,
That so he may do battle, and have praise."

(*The Ring and the Book.*)

Do we find in old age the sights and sounds by which the soul learned truth fading in the darkness, the active powers failing? This is an earnest not of death, but of life. God is taking away the earthly sight that the "celestial light" may so much the more shine inward. He is withdrawing us into some quiet retreat, that we may "ponder on the entire past"; the evening shades are gathering that we may sleep and wake refreshed.

"Lie bare, to the universal prick of light!
Is it for nothing we grow old and weak,
We whom God loves?" (*Death in the Desert.*)

"Ponder on the entire past
Laid together thus at last,
When the twilight helps to fuse
The first fresh with the faded hues,
And the outline of the whole,
As round eve's shades their framework roll,
Grandly fronts for once thy soul.
And then, as 'mid the dark, a gleam
Of yet another morning breaks,
And, like the hand which ends a dream,
Death, with the might of his sunbeam,
Touches the flesh, and the soul awakes,
Then———" (*Flight of the Duchess.*)

"So, still within this life,
Though lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last.

* * * * *

So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age: wait death nor be afraid."

(*Rabbi Ben Ezra.*)

"And stung by straitness of our life made strait
On purpose to make sweet the life at large,
Freed by the throbbing impulse we call death,
We burst there, as the worm into the fly,
Who, while a worm still, wants his wings." (*Cleon.*)

The lovers of Browning's poetry wonder that any one can ask the question, Is he a religious poet? True, he has not written religious epica

as Dante and Milton, and there are but few poems which are definitely on religious subjects, but the unseen is ever present to him. He is ever seeking to interpret the seen by the unseen, to justify the ways of God to man. He is ever conscious of the double life, of a Divine presence,

"The spiritual life around the earthly life :
Which runs across some vast distracting orb
Of glory on either side that meagre thread." (*An Epistle.*)

"God glows above
With scarce an intervention presses close
And palpitatingly His soul o'er ours !
We feel Him, nor by painful reason know." (*Luria.*)

So we are never shut in by the visible universe ; it is to us the veil, the sacrament of the invisible, the infinite, the *καλόν καγαθόν*. Yet is the Infinite no mere pantheistic presence, but the Father of spirits, manifested first and pre-eminently in the soul of man, His child, who, because he *is* a son, is heir of all things. Thus does the Christian teaching interpenetrate all his thoughts. Yet to the religious consciousness of some Browning does not speak. There are childlike souls who have ever looked up to God in simple loving faith, over whose being the storms of doubt have never swept, who have not known what it is to sit in the midst of a thick darkness, a darkness that may be felt ; an unquestioning faith is theirs, and they have never had to wrestle with the problems of life. To such Browning may appear non-religious, yes, even irreligious, as did Job to his friends, because he cannot receive truth from the outside ; it must be looked at from his deepest consciousness, an external revelation is not enough ; it is not put in the forefront, because to him it is the outcome, the complement of that which is known by the intuitions of the soul ; for though we may believe a person, we cannot believe in a person because some one tells us he did wonderful works—we must be united by inward sympathies,

"Whereby truth, deadened of its absolute blaze,
Might need love's eye to pierce the o'erstretched doubt."
(*Death in the Desert.*)

We know the Divine through the Spirit bearing witness with our spirit ; in other words, the kingdom of heaven is within.

Thus Browning seems to me a prophet whom God has given to our storm-tost age, a pilot who has learnt by long experience the hidden rocks and sandbanks on which the vessel of faith may be wrecked, now that the old anchor chains are burst asunder. An infallible Church, an infallible Book, an infallible Pope, all these have failed us—failed us that, rejecting the stones of the desert, we may learn that man doth not live by bread alone, but by the word of God doth man live. I will take a few typical poems familiar to most of us, to establish my position.

His ideal of what a *poet* is called to be is given in his picture of a Contemporary.

"I only knew one poet in my life,
And this or something like it was his way."

And then we read of one who walked about in the haunts of men,

"Scenting the world, looking it full in face,
Trying the mortar's temper 'tween the chinks."

Watching common sights and common people, and seeing, not the outside shows, but the real thing behind, and thus awakening the conscience, and exercising a kingship by right Divine. Judging not according to the appearance, but righteous judgment.

"My father, like the man of sense he was,
Would point him out to me a dozen times.
'St, St,' he'd whisper, 'the Corregidor.'"

"If any beat a horse, you felt he saw;
If any cursed a woman, he took note,
Yet stared at nobody—you stared at him,
And found, less to your pleasure than surprise,
He seemed to know you, and expect as much."

(*How it strikes a Contemporary.*)

His reward was to know he was

"Doing the king's work all the dim day long,"

whilst the tongue of scandal was busy with his life—a life which the low and sensual cannot believe in. At last dying on

"The neat low truckle bed";

alone haply, as far as man could see, but waited on by unseen hosts.

And mark, though no audible voice spoke to the poet, though no vision of glory appeared, yet he *knew*, he *felt* the king's approval.

"But never word or sign that I could hear
Notified to this man about the street
The king's approval of those letters.

* * * * *

Was some such understanding 'twixt the two?"

"Hereby we know that we know Him, because we love Him and keep His commandments."

The consciousness of the priesthood of the true poet breathes through the whole of *Sordello*; his sin was that he was unfaithful almost unto the end to the spirit within him, that he was content to enjoy, to receive, when he was heir to the kingship over humanity, the crown of which is a crown of thorns. His claim to the throne had to be made good by the power of self-sacrifice, by dying to self, that he might find a larger life in those for whom he lived, and this at last redeems

the erring one. What grander picture can be drawn of a poet than that of the ideal Sordello,

"the complete Sordello, Man and Bard,
John's cloud-girt angel, this foot on the land,
That on the sea, with, open in his hand,
A bitter-sweetling of a book."

In the consciousness of an unseen presence then, in the faith that there is a reality behind the shows of earth, a meaning in this wondrous kosmos, and that each lives and dies nobly who faces the sphinx and gives an answer to the riddle of life; in the faith that though here we know *in part*, we shall one day truly know, Browning addresses himself to his task.

And what is it which calls out first in us the sense of poetry? Ask the great poets of the world. It is the sight of suffering. The real must be unsatisfying ere we seek for the ideal. The great epics and dramas have all been tragic; each has his own vision of Prometheus, agonizing humanity. If there is one poem into which Browning has thrown all his artistic power, I think it is *Saul*. How grand is the stage on which we see the suffering Titan! the black tent in the midst of the sand "burnt to powder"; the blinding glare without, darkness within. There he endures in the desert, through which flow no refreshing streams to quench the thirst of his soul; he who once had "heard the words of God, had seen the vision of the Almighty," is now blinded by the glory, and he knows not the love which his own heart has cast out. There he hangs, upon his cross,

"He stood, as erect as the tent-prop, both arms stretched out wide,
On the great cross-support in the centre that goes to each side.
He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there, as caught in his pangs,
And waiting his change, the king-serpent all heavily hangs
Far away from his kind, in the pine, till deliverance come
With the spring-time;—so agonized Saul, drear and stark, blind and dumb."

To him, doubly shut out from the light of heaven, comes youth and beauty and innocence personified in David. He comes like a ministering angel, the dew of heaven in his "gracious gold hair," with bright lilies telling of life and hope—

"Just broken to twine round thy harp-strings, as if no wild heat
Were now raging to torture the desert."

Then he sings the simple songs of the shepherd lad, the beauty and peace of nature, the felt harmony and love in all things.

"God made all the creatures, and gave them our love and our fear,
To give sign we and they are His children, one family here."

Next he passes on to the tale of human joys and sorrows; but there *is no response* till he comes to that which gives to man's life a meaning, *the consciousness* of a glory beyond.

"Then here in the darkness Saul groaned,
 And I paused, held my breath in such silence, and listened apart ;
 And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shuddered, and sparkles 'gan dart
 From the jewels that woke in his turban at once with a start
 All its lordly male-sapphires and rubies, courageous at heart ;
 So the head ; but the body still moved not, still hung there erect."

He tries another theme. He tells of the joyous sense of life and vigour, once felt by the warrior king ; bids him follow again the story of the past, and thence believe in the love of God.

"Let one more attest

I have lived, seen God's hand thro' a lifetime, and all was for best."

Then he shows him in the lives of others the ennobling of the soul through suffering.

"Such result as, from seething grape-bundles, the spirit-strained true."

From the vantage-ground of the past he would have him contemplate the present suffering ; through sorrow he had been crowned.

"Then Saul, who hung propped

By the tent's cross-support in the centre, was struck by his name.

One long shudder thrilled

All the tent till the very air tingled, then sank, and was stilled

At the king's self, left standing before me, released and aware."

But this only awakens the king to consciousness, it cannot restore him. Can he live by the thought that his life may enter into the being of humanity, that though he perish he may pour out palm wine for the life of posterity ; can he be sustained by the enthusiasm of humanity ? No ! the wretched despise themselves ; only in the consciousness of a larger life and love, sustaining, fulfilling them, can they hope to bless others. They must be conscious of a love, not small enough for them to possess, but large enough to possess them ; of an ocean in which they and all may be baptized, of a boundless love in which we may all live and move ; a spiritual presence, which, brooding over the dead soul, awakens it to a responsive life. And it is upon the revelation of the Divine love first revealed within the soul that our poet rests the salvation of humanity. The love which David feels kindling, glowing, burning in himself towards this sufferer, what is it but the Spirit bearing witness with his spirit to the deeper depths of the Divine love ?

"Shall the creature surpass the Creator,—the end, what began ?

Would I fain, in my impotent yearning, do all for this man,

And dare doubt, He alone shall not do it, who yet alone can."

As man's love yearns to utter itself, though it cannot, so must the Divine love, and God can. Man cannot utter through the feeble body, in the bonds of time, the infinite love which he yet feels within, but the Infinite, the Eternal, God is uttering it in all creation, in every soul of

man who feels and responds to the music of heaven. This it is which restores life to the dying soul, whilst to the prophet, the Divine incarnation becomes a fact realized in the inner consciousness; it is a truth antecedent to and resting upon a deeper foundation than any external evidence, it is a truth in Plato's sense; it is a Divine, an eternal idea, which *must* be realized in time, be one day revealed to redeem the world. So he passes on from the *must be* to the *shall be*; this was the argument of the risen Lord, ἔδει παθεῖν τὸν χριστόν.

"Then the truth came upon me. No harp more—no song more! outbroke

* * * * *

I believe it! 'Tis thou, God, that givest, 'tis I who receive.

* * * * *

Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst thou—so wilt thou!
So shall crown thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost crown,
And thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in!

* * * * *

He who did most shall bear most; the strongest shall stand the most weak.
'Tis the weakness in strength that I cry for! my flesh that I seek
In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee: a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, for ever: a Hand like this hand
Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand."

And in the consciousness of this Divine presence, the Divine love comes in like a flood upon his soul, it overflows into creation, all vibrates to the music of heaven, and trembles in the glow of its surpassing glory; the earth is transformed, there seems no longer an inanimate, for the life of God Himself breathes through all.

"And the stars of night beat with emotion and tingled and shot
Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge: but I fainted not,
For the Hand still impelled me at once and supported, suppressed
All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet and holy behest,
Till the rapture was shut in itself and the earth sank to rest."

And as we read we feel the poet has given us a higher idea of inspiration; no outside voice is heard now; the revelation is not by the voice of nature through sense and understanding, but through the heart; the love of God possesses the soul, the heart of God is felt beating with the heart of man; it is a moral revelation. In the depths of man's being is felt the quickening spirit, the true enthusiasm, and he rises to a new life; there is the revelation to the human consciousness of the Divine in man,—the central truth of Christianity.

But the pessimist may turn to the reverse; it may be said, if the intuitions of the noble tell of self-sacrifice and love, what about the degraded creeds that men have held? are not these all the outcome, the utterances of humanity too, though on a lower plane? Mr. Browning has *not shrunk* from facing this question. As in the poem of *Saul* we have

intuitions, which enable us to grasp Divine truth, in *Caliban* we have a teaching from the text, "Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself." He refuses to recognize as man, one without moral consciousness. He does not believe that there is any such monster born of woman, or, if such lives, he has descended from the human to the animal kingdom, by starving or poisoning the spirit. His creed, derived from the experience of his own wickedness, needs but to be expressed to be rejected. Caliban is a monster, for *he* is not a man who has no aspirations, who is content to lie and kick in the mud, who is a slave of impulse. His god, Setebos, is only a monstrous Caliban.

In these two poems I think Browning has sought to illustrate the deep truth that according to our moral standard are we able to receive Divine light and truth into our being. Let him not, however, be misunderstood. It is not historical propositions about Divine truth with which he is dealing—these, as St. James says, devils may believe—but the faith which lifts us out of the region of the phenomenal and transitory and imperfect into the real, the eternal, the inwardly true.

But it may be said, if God be indeed love, if man's utmost joy is to enter into the full recognition of that love (which is eternal life), why are we left to grope our way in the dim light? why does God not open for us the portals of the grave, let us look beyond, and then, with light and truth in our minds, return to lead our life here.

Bearing in mind the neo-platonic psychology which underlies Browning's thought, and is fully expressed in the *Death in the Desert*, we may say that as in *Saul* we have the truly human, the man in whom the soul predominates, and in *Caliban* the bestial type, so in the *Epistle of Karshish* we have the spiritual, the supernatural man, and his theology.

The scene of the drama is a land desolated by war, dangerous from robbers and beasts of prey, barren and dreary, as it seems; yet in it are content to journey, or to live, two men—one to whom the soul's life perishes with the body, who therefore spends his time in studying how best

"To coop up and keep down on earth a space
That puff of vapour from God's mouth, man's soul;"

the other, to whom this life is but a shadow of the true.

We have in Lazarus the study of a soul that has seen things as they are, whose life has therefore passed out of the sphere of the phenomenal into that of the real. He has seen the "consuming fire" of the Divine glory, and "the elements have melted with fervent heat." Sensitive only to that transcendent light, the things of earth seem but as shadows, and the path of life a

"meagre thread
Which runs across some vast, distracting orb
Of glory."

Faith has passed into sight, and the human will is effaced in the Divine.

"Indeed the special marking of the man,
Is prone submission to the heavenly will—
Seeing it, what it is, and why it is."

But therefore is the moral discipline of life over for him; he can will only God's will. But in the order of God's education it is necessary we should walk first by faith, afterwards by sight; should work out the moral law ere we recognize it as Divine, else we could not know God as good, and there could be no personal life, only the absorption of the human will in the infinite. Virtue can take root only in the darkness; we need to live in a world opaque for us. If, whilst enduring the agony, we could see the joy set before us, how could our spiritual nature attain its full growth! No; we must utter the cry "*lama sabachthani*" ere we can say, "It is finished." "Clouds and darkness must be round about Him," that we may learn that "righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His seat." We must do right not only because we know God wills it, but we must know that God wills it because it is right. We are to yield not a "prone submission," a satisfied assent, but the gladness of a full consent. There may be submission to the Almighty, but there can be concord only with the All-good.

And it seems that Lazarus has lost his characteristics as a man, because for him the work of this life is over; he has anticipated the next stage of existence ere he has entered on it, and so there is discord.

"The law of that is known to him as this,
His heart and brain move there, his feet stay here,
So is the man perplex.

* * * * *
'It should be' balked by 'here it cannot be.'

This life, too, has lost with its educative power its interest; for to enjoy we must ever be seeking the unattained, ever advancing.

"He listened not, except I spoke to him,
But folded his two hands, and let them talk,
Watching the flies that buzzed.
* * * *
Sayeth he will wait patient to the last
For that same death, which must restore his being
To equilibrium, body loosening soul,
Divorced even now by premature full growth."

And he is no longer able to help others. We must *feel* their difficulties ere we can meet them; there must be a measure of stupidity in

us; one may be too clever to be a teacher. He despairs of unfolding spiritual realities, as we of explaining sight to the blind.

"How can he give his neighbour the real ground,
His own conviction."

"Hence I perceive not he affects to preach
The doctrine of his sect."

In conclusion the poet leads us to feel that we must learn by degrees to use the heavenly treasure, not demand our inheritance ere we have attained our majority; that the all-sufficient gospel is this—to know that the heart of God beats in sympathy with the heart of man.

"So All-great were the All-loving too—
So, through the thunder comes a human voice,
Saying, 'O heart I made, a heart beats here!
Face My hands fashioned, see it in Myself!
Thou hast no power, nor may'st conceive of Mine:
But love I gave thee, with Myself to love,
And thou must love Me who have died for thee!'"

We have said that Browning deals especially with the problems which force themselves most upon our age, and answers them as a poet, by appealing to our deepest consciousness, to our sense of what must be, to our moral intuitions.

Perhaps in none are we made more conscious of his deep spiritual sympathies than in the companion poems, *Easter Day* and *Christmas Eve*. Browning knows people better than they know themselves. Which of us has not at some time professed to hold a creed, and thought perhaps we did believe, what in the depths of our hearts we abhorred? So he faces the superficial thinker, and makes him know himself. Does the agnostic approach with a smiling countenance, saying, "I am content with this world's beauty, with science and art and law;" Browning leads him to an earthly paradise, where no voice of God is heard among the trees of the garden; he casts at his feet all the gifts of beauty, but they are gifts from no one; he places him in a tabernacle vast and glorious, and it becomes to him a prison-house, because there is no escape from it into a larger life; and as for human love, this too dies in the desert, it has no root, it is cut off from all that can feed its life; and at last the soul is made to feel the utter desolation of a life without God, to know what is eternal death, to understand that deepest utterance of man's heart, "This is life eternal, to know Thee;" to understand that the resurrection for man is this—to come into the full consciousness of union with God. Without it we pine and die amidst all the earth has to give; but, if we know it, streams water the desert, it rejoices and blossoms as the rose, the mountains and hills break forth into singing, and everything that hath breath praises God. And *Christmas Eve* is complementary to *Easter Day*. *That has dealt*

most with the relation of the individual soul to the source of its life—to the centre of the universe,—realized within. This deals with the relation of the soul to the life of God manifested in others; it teaches us that when we can say only My Father, not Our Father, we cannot enter into the mind of God, nor pray aright; that if we are not quite in darkness, we are only in the moonlight; if we are touching the hem of Christ's garment, we have not entered with Him the transfiguring cloud; we are not wrapt in that glory, we are only on the verge of light. And as in *Easter Day*, he forces us to face the thoughts, and see whether we really feel what we supposed we did, he shows us we cannot do without God; as we found in the one, that the love of God glorifies nature, and alone draws us into loving sympathy; so in *Christmas Eve* we find that same love it is, which, being shed abroad in our hearts, enables us to love man, to lose sight of what is merely phenomenal and faulty, and to go down to those deeper depths, where we meet in truest sympathy in the sense of a common need, a common aspiration, a common love. We have been sentimentalizing perhaps about love, bestowing our charity in inverse proportion to people's nearness to us. Browning brings us, as it were, face to face with our complacent religious selves, and he bids us then follow, cling to Christ, say with our hearts, "Where Thou goest, I will go." Then we listen to those words, "Where two or three are gathered together, there am I"—present, with infinite compassion and love; not with the refined and cultivated and æsthetic, but with those who are in your eyes ugly and ignorant and narrow; in that miserable little Bethel, out of which you have dashed with contempt; present, because their souls are seeking Me, and longing for the light, and are therefore growing up into it, though their life does seem so dreary and dark to you; present with those you despise for utter want of æsthetic sense. Present in the great cathedral, with those too whom you regard as superstitious, because the emotions of their souls are expressed in the ascending incense, the thrilling music, the pictured forms. Yes, even with him who knows Me not as a living Presence, but desires truth; who has with toilsome steps climbed the mountain-tops, that he might dwell in a region of pure light, and who is starving amidst the snows; even to him I come breathing warmth and love, and therefore life. None are cast out of My Presence; if you cast out from your love any human soul, you must let go then of the hem of that garment from whence virtue goes out to all suffering humanity.

There is a musical trilogy which corresponds with the three poems on which I have previously dwelt. And here I may perhaps remark that I know of no modern poet at least, in whom art is so unified as in Browning; the scenery and sound so harmonized with the thought. He

owes his excellence in this partly to his familiarity with Greek drama, especially with *Æschylus*. Comparing the three poems, we may say *Saul* corresponds to *Hugues of Saxe-Gotha*; *Caliban*, the debased, the bestial, to the *Toccata of Galuppi*; *Abt Vogler* to *Lazarus*, the glorified, spiritualized man.

The central poem, *Master Hugues of Saxe-Gotha*, represents the truly human, the soul seeking to interpret the perplexed music of earth, arguing, disputing, contending, in the faith that there is a meaning in all, though the final answer is delayed. The very sound is given of the perplexed intricate fugue, with its many melodies, crossing, interpenetrating, and moving on together.

"One says his say with a difference ;
More of expounding, explaining ;
All now is wrangle, abuse, and vociference ;
Now there's a truce, all's subdued, self-restraining,
Five, though, stands out all the stiffer hence.

Est fuga, volvitur rota,
On we drift : where looms the dim port ?
One, Two, Three, Four, Five, contribute their quota ;
Something is gained, if one caught but the import—
Show it us, Hugues of Saxe Gotha.

So your fugue broadens and thickens,
Greatens and deepens and lengthens."

And the same thought of the perplexities of life is repeated to the sight in the intricate mouldings of the roof. Our scene is a mediæval church, in which the musician lingers; the dim lights are growing dimmer as the sexton extinguishes one after another, and the golden cherubs which reflect some of that feeble light are partly hidden by the cobwebs.

"There ! see our roof, its gilt moulding and groining
Under those spider-webs lying.

* * * * *
Is it your moral of Life ?
Such a web, simple and subtle."

The answer does not come, the meaning cannot be evolved, the vision of glory is only dimly seen through the symbols of earth.

"So we o'ershroud stars and roses,
Cherub and trophy and garland ;
Nothings grow somethings which quietly closes
Heaven's earnest eye ; not a glimpse of the far land
Gets through our comments and glozes."

And as the last candle by which he had been able to interpret the music, sinks in its socket, he stumbles down the dangerous staircase, out of the dark church into the moonlight silence, whither we cannot follow; the lights of earth extinguished for him, the restless questioning over.

A Toccata of Galuppi's corresponds with *Caliban*. Here we have the low, sensuous, the fleshly school, with no outlook beyond the amusements of the immediate present; the scene, a ball-room in Venice. We hear the light foolish talk, scarcely lulled as the musician begins.

"I can always leave off talking when I hear a master play!"

For the roar of the fugue we have a music like the thin chirp of a cricket, wonderfully imitated in the monosyllabic verse, a sort of grown-up baby language, full of affectations; a silly, inane music which brings before us a ghastly vision of dead men and women, for whom life had no meaning at all.

"Did young people take their pleasure, when the sea was warm in May?
Balls and masks begun at midnight, burning ever to midday,
When they made up fresh adventures for the morrow, do you say?"

Then they left you for their pleasure, till in due time, one by one,
Some with lives that came to nothing, some with deeds as well undone,
Death stepped tacitly and took them, where they never see the sun."

And lastly there is *Abt Vogler*, the music of faith grand and mighty, which evokes the sense of spiritual presences,

"Claiming each slave of the sound at a touch, as when Solomon willed
Armies of angels that soar, legions of demons that lurk,"

building up a world of real harmony—a world true because ideal.

"Ah, one and all how they helped, would dispart now, and now combine,
Zealous to hasten the work, heighten their master his praise."

We are no longer shut in, as at Saxe-Gotha, in a church in which the lights are dying out one by one. We are watching a glorious cathedral grow before our eyes, and the glory is ever spreading, and the light is ever increasing, ascending higher and higher, until earth and heaven become one, and the bounds of space and time are lost in an eternal present.

"For higher still and higher (as a runner tips with fire
When a great illumination surprises a festal night),
Outlining round and round Rome's dome from space to spire
Up, the pinnacled glory reached, and the pride of my soul was in sight."

The lights are climbing from earth to the sky; we see terrace above terrace shine forth, and the lights are spirits ascending heavenward, even as in Jacob's vision of the angels, ascending ere they descended, and forming, as they lose themselves in the sky, a vision of a Church triumphant, such as Dante beheld in Paradise.

"And another would mount and march like the excellent minion he was,
Ay, another and yet another, one crowd but with many a crest,
Raising my rampired walls of gold as transparent as glass,
Eager to do and die, yield each his place to the rest."

And the music ascends up and up, until the sense of effort is gone, for the highest pinnacle of earthly endeavour is reached, and then the

soul sinks into the infinite and is lost, yet lives in the life and light of heaven.

"The emulous heaven yearned down, made effort to reach the earth,
As the earth had done her best, in my passion to scale the sky :
For earth had attained to heaven, there was no more near nor far."

All is then seen not as it is to sense, but as it exists truly in the Divine idea, one day to come forth from the region of being to the region of consciousness. All the possibilities, which to us are not, but which truly are, the Divine ideas, one day to become existent in the visible.

"Nay more ; for there wanted not who walked in the glare and glow,
Presences plain in the place ; or fresh from the Protoplast,
Furnished for ages to come, when a kindlier wind should blow,
Lured now to begin and live."

All that too is seen as existing, which to us was, and is not, but which truly is.

"Or else the wonderful dead who have passed through the body and gone,
But were back once more to breathe in an old world worth their new."

And as the vision of the Infinite opens around, it becomes clear that no energy is lost, no true effort vain, for all life and energy are Divine,

"evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound."

The music of a holy life may die out on earth, but it exists for ever in the Eternal, the Unchanging, because it is the Divine idea.

"All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist ;
Not its semblance, but itself ; no beauty, nor good, nor power
Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist,
When eternity affirms the conception of an hour ;
The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard,
The passion that left the ground, to lose itself in the sky,
Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard ;
Enough that he heard it once : we shall hear it by and by."

But is it true, as some say, that the teaching of these earlier poems is superseded by that of the later, and so the poet has destroyed his own work ? To me it seems that in the later poems there is a more restful faith than in the earlier ; a belief less vehement, and therefore less struggling. Is there not a deep significance in the beautiful story of *Alcestis* (*Balaustion's Adventure*) ; a real consciousness which needs not proof in *Prospice*, in some passages of the *Ring and the Book*, in *A Wall*, and in the beautiful prologue and epilogue of *Fifine*. The vehement questionings of *La Suisiaz*, what are they but the cries of a present grief, which we all utter, as we see some loved friend pass out of sight. We cry to the whirlwind, "Wherefore ? whereto ?" No answer comes, but the heart replies.

"Traversed heart must tell its story uncommented on : no less
Mine results in 'Only grant a second life, I acquiesce

In this present life as failure, count misfortune's worst assaults
 Triumph, not defeat; assured that loss so much the more exalts
 Gain about to be. For at that moment did I so advance
 Near to knowledge, as when frustrate of escape from ignorance?
 Did not beauty prove most precious when its opposite obtained
 Rule, and truth seem more than ever potent because falsehood reigned?
 While for love—Oh how but, losing love, does whoso loves succeed
 By the death-pang to the birth-throe—learning what is love indeed?
 Only grant my soul may carry high through death her cup unspilled,
 Brimming though it be with knowledge, life's loss drop by drop distilled,
 I shall boast it mine—the balsam, bless each kindly wretch that wrung
 From life's tree its inmost virtue, tapped the root whence pleasure sprung,
 Barked the bole, and broke the bough, and bruised the berry, left all grace
 Ashes in death's stern alembic, loosed elixir in its place!"

I grant that in the later poems he cares less to formulate. As we climb higher and our vision widens, that which once seemed the whole truth now takes its place as part only of a larger, more embracing unity. In our individual lives, as in the world's history, we follow the sun in his course; but horizons change, and we never reach the land of light; truth recedes, but it is to tempt us onward; the crystal spheres of the world's childhood are broken, and if for a moment the soul flutters down and stands panting upon some solid cliff, she rises thence having plumed her pinions for a longer flight; she returns again and again only to renew her strength, and at last, in all the might of a great trust in the All-good, she wings her flight into the infinite unknown. This utter trust is proved only when we can go forth, as the faithful of old, not knowing whither we go.

"truth is truth in each degree;
 Thunderpealed by God to nature, whispered by my soul to me.
 Nay, the weakness turns to strength and triumphs in a strength beyond:
 'Mine is but man's truest answer—how were it did God respond?'
 I shall no more dare to mimic such response in futile speech,
 Pass off human lisp as echo of the sphere-song out of reach."

"Only a learner,
 Quick one or slow one,
 Just a discernor,
 I would teach no one." (*Pisgah Sights.*)

The lesson taught in the earlier poem of *Saul* is repeated in the latest, that the Divine love shed abroad in our hearts is the witness for a Divine love which we can trust for ever and ever; and it is the strength of this inner consciousness, the witness of the Spirit, that has enabled the poet-seers of all ages to sing loud above the storm-waves their Gloria in excelsis.

"Soul that canst soar!
 Body may slumber,
 Body shall cumber
 Soul-flight no more.

"Waft of soul's wing!
 What lies above?
 Sunshine and love."
 (*Pisgah Sights.*)

XVII.

AN ACCOUNT OF ABBÉ VOGLER.

(FROM FÉTIS & NISARD.)

BY MISS ELEANOR MARX.

THE Abbé George Joseph Vogler was born at Würzburg (Bavaria) on the 15th June, 1749. His father, a musical instrument maker, had the boy taught the *clavécin*, but George soon surpassed his master. Alone, and without any instruction, he learnt to play upon several instruments, and also invented a new system of fingering, which he subsequently taught in his schools. Abt Vogler began his humanities in the Jesuit College of his native town, and concluded his studies at the Jesuit Seminary of Bamberg. In 1771 he went to Mannheim, where he obtained permission to compose a ballet for the Court Theatre. Charles Theodore, the Elector Palatine, now became his patron, and at his own expense sent Vogler to study counterpoint under the direction of Father Martini at Bologna. Vogler, however, soon wearied of the old teacher's slow method, and with characteristic impatience left him after six weeks. He now proceeded to Padua, and while studying theology there, also took lessons in harmony and musical composition with Father Valotti. This time the pupil proved more persevering, and remained with his instructor for five months. Valotti's system of harmony delighted Vogler, who founded his own system upon it. His theological studies ended, Vogler set out for Rome, where he was ordained priest. In spite of his youth, the Abbé seems to have already enjoyed a certain reputation, for he met with a most sympathetic reception in the Eternal City. He was even made "apostolic protonotary, chamberlain to the Pope, chevalier of the Golden Spur, and member of the Academy of 'Arcades' (?)". In 1775 he returned to Mannheim, where his first act was to open a School of Music. He now published several works: ¹ an exposition of his Theory of Music and Composition (*Tonwissenschaft und*

¹ A complete list is given in Nisard's *Vie de L'Abbé Vogler*.

Tonsetzkunst); on the art of forming the voice (*Stimmbildungskunst*), &c. These publications raised a critical storm against Vogler, who was accused of "charlatanism," and of not producing in his famous school the wonderful results he had predicted. Nevertheless, this school *did* produce some illustrious musicians. The names of Winter, Knecht, and Ritter speak for themselves. During the latter years of his residence at Mannheim, Vogler had been appointed chaplain and second *kappel-meister*, and at this period composed a "Miserere," of which Mozart speaks very slightly. Indeed Mozart is so bitter that one is tempted to accept M. Fétis' suggestion that he owed the Abbé some personal grudge.

In 1779 Charles Theodore succeeded to the Electorate of Bavaria, and settled down at Munich, whither Vogler followed him. Towards 1780 Vogler had composed a little opera, *The Merchant of Smyrna*, an overture and some *entractes* to *Hamlet*; *Ino*, a ballet, and *Lampredo*, a melodrama. In 1781 his opera *Albert III.* was produced at the Court Theatre of Munich. This did not meet with the admiration its composer had anticipated, and he shortly after resigned his posts of chaplain and master of the choir. There is some doubt as to Vogler's next movements, but it is probable that, tired of being a continual butt for the German critics, he went abroad to appeal to the musicians of other nations. At any rate he was in Paris in 1783, and his comic opera *La Kermesse* was brought out, but failed so signally that the performance could not be concluded. After this failure Vogler travelled in Spain, Greece, and the East, returning to Europe in 1786, when he proceeded to Sweden, and was there appointed *Kapel-meister*¹ to the King. About this time Vogler had the "musical instrument of his invention," which he called an "Orchestrion," constructed.² In 1789 Vogler himself performed upon his "instrument" at Amsterdam, but with no success. Certain enthusiastic admirers exalted the orchestrion above the most beautiful organs of Holland, with the result that other critics had recourse to violent accusations in order to depreciate Vogler's invention. The latter now went to London with his organ, and in January 1790 gave a series of concerts. These proved eminently successful; the Abbé realized some £1200 (30,000 francs), and made a name

¹ It is difficult to say what Vogler's functions as *kappel-meister* were. He might have been simply the director of the church choir, or, as is probable, director also of the orchestra, and charged with superintending all the musical productions at Court.

² This was a very compact organ, in which four key-boards of five octaves each, and a pedal board of thirty-six keys, with swell complete, were packed into a cube of nine feet. See Fétis's *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens*.—G. Grove.

as an organist. He was then commissioned to reconstruct the organ of the Pantheon on the plan of his Orchestrion, and at a later date Vogler received like commissions at Copenhagen and at Neu Ruppín in Prussia. On his return to Germany in August 1790 the Abbé met with most brilliant receptions at Coblenz, Frankfort, and in Suabia, and at last succeeded in attracting general attention to his compositions. His opera *Castor and Pollux* was performed at Mannheim in 1791, and obtained a legitimate success, the overture and some numbers of the score being printed. Soon after Vogler published at Spire a collection of pieces under the title of *Polymelos*, or characteristics of the music of different peoples. In the same year Vogler performed several times on the organ at Hamburg, and his opera *Gustavus Adolphus* was brought out in Stockholm a few days before the assassination of Gustavus III. In this town Vogler also lectured on his system of harmony, and published a treatise in Swedish on the same subject. In the spring of 1794 Vogler again visited Paris, wishing, he said, to study the *genre* of music adopted by the French revolutionists at the public fêtes, and to add the result of his observations to the materials of his *Polymelos*. At Paris he gave an organ recital in the Church of St. Sulpice, at which many artists were present, and which added immensely to his already high reputation. Thus the Paris of 1794 avenged the insults of 1783.

Vogler returned to fulfil his engagement at Stockholm, but his duties as *Kapel-meister* took up so little of his time during the minority of Gustavus IV., and so rarely afforded him an opportunity for distinguishing himself, that in 1796, at the conclusion of his engagement, he asked for his pension; but the successful results obtained by him in his School of Music induced the Duke of Sudermanie, regent of the kingdom, to beg him to prolong his stay in Sweden. This Vogler consented to do, and remained there till 1799, when he received a pension of 500 *écus*. He next visited Denmark, founding a School of Music at Copenhagen. Here Vogler also published many works, his *Choral System* appearing in 1800. In the same year he produced what is considered his finest work, *Hermann de Unna*, a drama with overture, choruses, songs, and dance music, originally composed to a Swedish libretto. This drama proved a great success, and was performed the following year at Berlin, the score being published at Leipzig. At Berlin Vogler gave several concerts, and published his *Data zur Akustik*. From Berlin he proceeded to Prague, where he remained about two years, delivering lectures at the University. In 1803 he left Prague for Vienna, where he wrote his opera *Samori*, which was performed in 1804. The war drove Vogler from Austria in 1805, and he returned to Munich, where his opera *Castor and Pollux* was performed on the

occasion of Eugène Beauharnais' marriage with the Princess of Bavaria. During the next few years Vogler published various works, chiefly on acoustics, and at different periods paid visits to Frankfort and certain towns on the Rhine. In 1807 Vogler was invited by the Grand Duke Louis I. to go to Darmstadt and accept the post of *Kapel-meister*. This he did, founding there his last school. One of his pupils here was Carl Maria von Weber, another was Meyerbeer. The latter when a boy of twelve had written a fugue, which Weber sent his old master Vogler; but instead of the enthusiastic letter he had expected, Weber received a voluminous treatise on the theory and practice of the fugue. Weber was disappointed, but Meyerbeer delighted. Vogler's theory was a revelation to him, and setting to work, he composed another fugue, and sent it to the Abbé, who this time wrote, "There is a great future before you in the art. Come to me at Darmstadt; I will receive you like a son." And when Meyerbeer was fifteen he entered Vogler's school. Of Vogler's method of instruction we know something through Meyerbeer. After mass in the morning the Abbé assembled all his pupils, and gave them an oral lesson in counterpoint; then he gave them a composition to write on a given theme, and wound up the day's work by a careful examination and analysis of what each pupil had written. Sometimes, too, Vogler took his pupils to the principal church, in which were two organs; and there, seated before the one, and his pupils in turn before the other, he improvised with them. For two years Meyerbeer studied with Vogler, when the school was closed, and the Abbé travelled with his pupils from one town to another. Thus from Vogler's first school proceeded Winter, Knecht, and Ritter; from his second Weber and Meyerbeer. Surely a sufficient answer to those who would see in him a mere "charlatan." That Vogler was much liked by his pupils there can be no doubt. Weber calls him his "well-beloved" and "cherished" master, and on hearing of his death, wrote, "Peace be to his ashes. I have much to thank him for, and he has always shown me the most sincere affection." That Vogler was not ungrateful, nor, as Mozart says, "a fool who thinks there is no one greater than himself," we know, too, from his generous acknowledgment of the debt he owed Valotti. "I did not invent the whole of my system, but learnt it in 1775 from Father Valotti, an old man of eighty, who for over fifty years had been *Kapel-meister* in Padua." This he writes in his *Choral System* (1800), in which he wittily and energetically defends himself against the attacks and misrepresentations of which he had been a victim. At the end of this amusing little book, after an earnest wish that "Harmonizers and professors would harmonize a little more," and "that for once the

zeal of artists for their art might grow and stifle their envy of fellow-artists," he appeals to the "Philistines of Lilliput," his countrymen, "to awake from lethargic slumber," and to

"Hear (music),
See (scores),
Feel (effects),
And think!"

In 1814 Vogler died. During the last few months of his life he lived quietly at Darmstadt, occupied chiefly with the publication of his last works. (Nisard, *Vie de L'Abbé Vogler*, and Fétis, *Biographie Universelle des Musiciens*.)

[Those who object that Abt Vogler should not have been taken as the type of a great Musician, because none of his work survives, are reminded that Browning takes Vogler as a great Extemporizer only, and dwells on the evanescence of his art. His title of 'Abbé' justifies the assumption of his deep religious feeling. I have heard Browning say that he thought Mendelssohn's extemporizing more wonderful than his writing.—F.]

SCRAPS.

1850. 'Art and Poetry: Being Thoughts towards Nature.' Conducted principally by Artists.¹ No. 4, April, p. 187-192. A plea justifying Browning's style, by W. M. Rossetti, under the heading "Reviews, *Christmas Eve and Easter Day*: by Robert Browning," a book not toucht on in the article: this style "is not, in many cases, that which is spoken of as something extraneous, dragged in aforethought, for the purpose of singularity, the result more truly of a most earnest and single-minded labor after the utmost rendering of idiomatic conversational truth; the rejection of all stop-gap words; about the most literal transcript of fact compatible with the ends of poetry and true feeling for Art."

1860. *Nightingale Valley* / a collection / including a great number / of the choicest Lyrics / and / short poems / in / the English Language / edited by Giralduſ.—[Motto] London / Bell & Daldy, 186, Fleet Street / 1860.

[A subsequent edition, 1862, adds, "Edited by William Allingham."]

Contains, *My Last Duchess*; *Proetus*; *The Laboratory*; *Up in a Villa*, &c.; *May and Death*.

Note Q, page 143:

"*The Laboratory*.—A Study of the present lyric will throw some light upon the principles of this wonderful Poet's Versification. Take this verse, for example, and emphasize the words given in italics:—

'He is with *her*; and they *know* that *I* know
Where they *are*, what they *do*: they believe *my tears* flow
While *they laugh*, laugh at *me*, at *me* fled to the drear
Empty church to pray God in for *them*!—*I am here*.'"—T. W. CARSON.

¹ The Title to Nos. 1 and 2, Jan. and Feb. 1850, is "The Germ: / Thoughts towards Nature / In Poetry, Literature, and Art." Nos. 3 and 4 are as above.

1861. Dante G. Rossetti. 'Early Italian Poets.' Preface, p. xi, refers to "a great living poet", and quotes 14 lines from *Sordello*, Bk. I. "Still, what if I approach the august sphere," to "If I should falter now."—B. SAGAR.

1873. Poems by the late Isa Blagden. With a Memoir by Alfred Austin. A few lines in the Memoir, p. xiv, saying it will be agreeable to Mr. Browning if record is made that Miss Blagden was kind to Mrs. Browning during her last illness.

1874. Giuseppe Chiarini, Poesie (Storie, Canti, Traduzioni di Heine. Traduzioni di Poesie Inglesi). In Livorno. Quotes on p. 5, Browning's 4 lines "Why take the artistic way to prove so much?" &c. *Ring and Book*, vol. iv. § xii. 841-4; has on p. 23, in the 'Al Lettore,' IV. p. 23, these lines on E. B. B. and R. B. (*De Gustibus*, l. 43-4.)

"E tu ch' alla mia patria
Tanta sacraستي eletta
Parte del carme, angelica
Britanna Elisabetta ;

Roberto, e tu che : Apritemi,
Dicesti, il cuore, e in esso
Leggerete d' Italia
Il sacro nome impresso : "

On p. 419, the latter verse is repeated, after 'Da Robert Browning,' and *Up at a Villa—Down in the City* is translated as "*Su in Villa e giù in Città* secondo la Distinzione fatta da un ragguardevole Personaggio Italiano." The attempt does not seem to me successful : witness the Virgin-procession bit,

"Suona mezzogiorno, e passa
La processione. Portan la Madonna,
Ridente e in gala, con un bel vestito
Di mussolina colore di rosa
Trapuntato di stelle, e sette spade
Conficcate nel cor ! Rulla il tamburo,

*Ra ta plan, ra ta plan ; suonano i
pifferi*

*Fi fi fi, fi fi fi ; tutti dimenano
Le gambe. Oh gli è pur questo il gran
piacere ! "*

(Mrs. Fitz-Gerald lent me the book.)

1876. Bayard Taylor. 'The Echo Club, and other Literary Diversions,' p. 21, 25, 33. Discussion of Browning's style mainly, with four imitations of a bit of *Sordello*, of *James Lee's Wife* ('By the Sea'), of the *Ring and the Book* ('Angelo orders his Dinner'), and of *Love among the Ruins* ('On the Track'). It says that "Browning is the most dramatic of poets since Shakspeare" (p. 25), that *Sordello* is perplexity, not profundity (p. 27), and shows the care with which the writer has read that poem by observing that "we have a right to be vexed with Browning, when, in the dedicatory letter to the new edition of *Sordello*, he says that he had taken pains to make the work something 'which the many might, instead of what the few must like,' but after all, did not choose to publish the revised copy (!) . . . However . . . Browning has a royal brain, and we owe him too much to bear malice against him."—Mrs. Fitz-Gerald lent me the book.

1876. E. D. W. 'Verses.' Sonnet, "To R. Browning." Sonnet, "Browning and Shelley."

1879. G. Barnett Smith. Robert Browning, an article of 19 pp. in the 'International Review' for Feb. 1879. This appears to be, in substance, the same as the memoir in *The Portrait*.—T. LANE.

1880. 'The Pen,' June 19. Note from Mr. W. G. Kingsland, with an extract from a letter written to him by Browning in 1868 on the charge of obscurity. "I can have little doubt that my writing has been in the main too hard for many I should have been pleased to communicate with ; but I never designedly tried to puzzle people, as some of my critics have supposed. On the other hand, I never pretended to offer such literature as should be a substitute for a cigar or a game at dominoes to an idle man. So, perhaps, on the whole I get my deserts, and something over—not a crowd, but a few I value more."

XVIII.

CONSCIENCE AND ART IN BROWNING.

BY THE REV. PROF. E. JOHNSON, M.A.

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It has often been remarked, that through all that wondrous spiritual scenery into which the magical art of Browning has led us, there runs a deep current of conviction, self-consistent from first to last, upon all the serious subjects of human thought: upon religion, art, conduct; and in particular upon the calling and functions of the Poet. A patient and united endeavour to "disengage this current" seems to be required of us as the first condition of the fuller understanding of one who has employed his art so distinctly in the service of Didactic. To enjoy this poetry in patches can never suffice us. And if we have started with the notion that poetry or any other form of art may be detached from personal faith, we have soon found that either we must part company with such notion, or with Browning. In compliance with a request, I have to arrange a few imperfect notes on some points of interest, more particularly with reference to the earlier poems, *Pauline*, *Paracelsus*,

and *Sordello*. It is admitted that in these Browning had already given clear expression to the faith on which his life-work has been built.

I may remark here that the satirical vein which Browning has of late followed more than in his earlier works (although it was opened in *Sordello*), serves to illustrate the uniqueness of the man, and the critical or even antagonistic attitude in which he stands towards the fashions of our generation. It seems to me that no satire more keen has been launched than that of Browning. Without meddling with our external manners (there was nothing new to be said on that subject), he has told us that the prevailing manner and fashion of our mind and thought is affected and false, that our taste is corrupt. It seems to me, therefore, that the most important thing is to get at Browning's theories if we can, and either confute them or submit to his superiority. Browning knows that he has never thus been met. He has been assailed, it appears, by folly and ignorance, never yet fully appreciated, because never half understood. For my own part, I cannot but feel that the difficulty of this study is very great. After all efforts at comparison and illustration, Browning will remain beyond and above us, the most solitary, the most distinct, at the same time the most piercing and inclusive, thinker of our time. I will speak first of Browning as the Poet of Conscience; next, refer to some points of Art and Æsthetic in his writings; and lastly, add a few words on his Religious Philosophy.

I. THE POET OF CONSCIENCE.

1. PAULINE.

It is now fifty years since this poem appeared. It was the work of a young man of twenty, and it is the self-revelation of a spirit most clearly conscious at that early age of its entire distinctness. There are things in this poem which remind of Shelley, others of Keats, some perhaps of Byron; but the author is a man who in the range of his thought draws a circle around them all. If there were those who on reading *Pauline* thought that here was a scion from the stock of Shelley or Keats, they must have soon been convinced that they had to deal with an intellect more comprehensive than either. With reference to Shelley, Browning has always spoken in terms of almost awful reverence. He appears, in a sense, to bow before him as a superior, and yet from the *Essay on Shelley* it appears that never was reverence less blind. Browning freely criticizes the boyishness of Shelley's social and religious notions. And it is perfectly clear that he was never

capable at any age of the mistakes of judgment which disfigure the writings of his sublime predecessor.

CONSCIENCE IN *PAULINE*.

The revelation of Conscience is most remarkable in this poem ; I mean in the most inclusive sense of that word—the perception of a dualism in the soul through all its moods. On the whole the poem presents a study of the profoundest and most tragical conscientious change. Never will the young poet be again what he has been.¹ At the same time that mood of Conscience that we call Humour is very marked, both in the citation from C. Agrippa at the beginning, and in the sudden appearance of *Pauline* herself in the character of critic, in French language, of this confession made to her in English verse.

But nothing can be more solemn and religious than the tone and the contents of the poem. The Divine call and anointing of the poet, so to speak ; his sin, which consists in a self-divorce ; his decline and degradation as he sinks into the “dim orb of self” ; finally his redemption and restoration by Divine love, mediated to him by human love. This is the theme of the poem, as it is, with differences, that of *Paracelsus* and *Sordello*. The intense light of Conscience pervades Browning’s works from beginning to end. His whole soul is pervaded by some luminous quality, which may often produce the effect of darkness upon us, because we are unaccustomed to endure such splendour.

I think I ought to notice that lowly evangelical temper, that profound piety which here appears, and throughout, so mildly hallowing, so gently subduing, the expression of an extraordinary strength. *Quo semel est imbuta recens servabit odorem testa diu*. This great poet is a Christian in grain, if I may so express myself. I mean in the sense in which it has been said that the Christian is the highest style of man. He is not one of those giants who are said in all ages to have fought against God. In passing, where can we find a better definition of Faith, on its passive side, the “feeling of Dependence” in the celebrated discourses of Schleiermacher, delivered some 35 years before, than the phrase in *Pauline*, “Rest beneath some better essence than itself” (the soul) “in weakness” ?²

May I say that if I compare Browning in any point with earlier writers, it is only to show that his faith has been early up, and has caught the rays of each new sunrise of Truth upon our time ?

¹ See the motto from C. Marot.

² p. 33.

2. THE HISTORIAN OF THE SOUL.

Prefixed to *Pauline*, as we have seen, is a passage from C. Agrippa, and the words "*Ego illa non probo, sed narro*" are printed in capitals. Here, then, at the age of twenty, we find the poet already conscious of his peculiar gift and call. I am the *Historian of the Soul*, in effect he says. I do not commend to you what I shall show you of the soul, but simply show it. Eight years later we find him comparing himself in a humorous strain to a showman, "motley on back, and pointing-pole in hand," ready to describe the "man" Sordello whom he has "made." The aptness of the citation from C. Agrippa lies in the fact that Agrippa was asking the indulgence of the reader for work written at about the same period of life as *Pauline*; and a fine and famous book was the *Occult Philosophy*. Moreover, C. Agrippa is one of Browning's fellows and friends of the past, a mystic and a mage like himself; in other words, one of those piercing and profound spirits who are always enigmas, disliked and suspected by the "dullards" of each generation. Browning tells us (through C. Agrippa) to beware lest we break our heads or poison ourselves over his verses. The fear is hinted again in the first lines of *Pauline*. I do not know whether any broken heads or poisoned veins have been caused by Browning's writings, but it appears that he has found after fifty years' work that the "drink he has brewed" is too strong for the heads of the many in his generation.¹ There is another point about C. Agrippa which he has in common with our poet. Agrippa was a profound psychologist.

During Agrippa's lifetime there was much talk of keys and clues to the Occult Philosophy. I will quote something he said on the subject, because it will be seen, I believe, to illustrate a certain vein of thought in Browning, who has shown himself in several poems to be in his way a believer in magic and necromancy. In one of his letters Agrippa said, "This is the true and occult philosophy of the wonders of Nature. The key thereto is Intelligence" (Ep. 19). In another letter he says that the astounding stories of the invincible power of magical art, of astrology, alchemy, and the philosopher's stone, were all idle and false if taken literally; at the same time, these traditions of serious philosophers were not lies. Then he adds, "We must not seek the principle of such great operations outside ourselves. There dwells a spirit in us which can produce all the wonders performed by mathematicians, alchemists, and astrologers."

"Nos habitat, non Tartara, sed nec sidera cœli,
Spiritus in nobis qui viget, illa facit."²

¹ *Pacchiarotto*.

² From Scheible's *Kleiner Wunder-Schauplatz* (Preface).

The germ of a similar theory of the true Magic may be found in *Pauline*. After tracing the truth of self-consciousness in general, the poet adds that in his case it is

"Linked to self-supremacy,
Existing as a Centre to all things,
Most potent to create and rule and call
Upon all things to minister to it."¹

Paracelsus (p. 58) is made to scoff at the "Black Arts" as idle pedantry; and the thought is repeated, "*Truth is within ourselves . . . There is an inmost centre in us all where truth abides in fulness.*" This inner light is a central principle of Browning's writings. The True, the Beautiful, the Good, all are subjective. Religion, Art, Ethics, all are modes of *one* spiritual æsthesiis. If we break up that unity we become false in thought. This principle he has applied with the greatest firmness and self-consistency to Christianity.

Here, then, lies the seat of the magician's power, as Browning knows it and has used it. In *Sordello* he is himself an archimage and a necromancer, who can call up ghosts at pleasure from the past. I see in the newspaper that some society is to be started to inquire further into ghosts. What need can there be of this so long as we have Browning amongst us? I should think there is no man who has so made us feel, if we are capable of feeling it, that the spiritual world is real and the only reality, that there is no space nor time between the spirit and its objects, that "love is all and death is naught." All ghost-lore seems melancholy imbecility after that which Browning has taught us.

The theory of Art is with Browning the theory of Magic. A single true work of art is capable of exhausting our faculty of wonder, because it presents the supreme triumph of spirit over matter. If we have once taken in the significance of a god or hero in Homeric poetry, or in Pheidias' sculpture, we have found ourselves at the centre of all wonder.

"Nothing ever will surprise me now—
Who stood beside the naked Swift-footed,
Who bound my forehead with Proserpine's hair."²

In specially religious associations the same inner light of the soul is what is known as the "realizing power of faith," of which it has been said that it can move mountains, and that all things are possible to it.

So recently as in *Pacchiarotto*, Browning repeats the thought with emphasis in the poem *Natural Magic*: "Impossible! only—I saw it! A fairy tale! Only—I feel it!"

¹ p. 13; cf. *Sludge*, p. 207.

² *Pauline*, p. 15.

For every individual the real world is the world of his particular phantasy—of his fears, wishes, hopes, and imaginings.¹ So, again, *Mesmerism* is "all true,"¹ and the miserable "spiritualist" *Sludge* is the false representative of a deep truth. So the poet has seen visions and dreamed dreams on Christmas and Easter Eve and other occasions which are real to him as those of any prophet.

In virtue of this inner light Browning has proved himself a great diviner. *Paracelsus* is the earliest illustration of this power.

Agrippa and Paracelsus were both pupils of the Abt Tritheim, another professor of the occult philosophy. Agrippa was one of those spirits whose fine ambitions bring them to wreck and misery on the rock of commonplace fact. Paracelsus, too, wrecked himself; but what attracted our poet to that tipsy, tavern-haunting, illiterate, bragging Bombastes Paracelsus, the founder of 'Homœopathy,' whose name has actually given currency to a common adjective of contempt in our language? The answer carries us straight to the heart of the poet, to another central and passionate conviction of his, that there is "some soul of goodness in things evil, would men observingly distil it out."

3. DIVINATION OF THE SOUL.

He has divined the soul of the poor quack, and brought to light its beauty in magnificent streams of eloquence; has exposed so faithfully and with such subtle truthfulness the secrets of his life-failure and tragedy, that no man can lay the book to his bosom without spiritual benefit and without affectionate gratitude to the author.

For a moment let me pass on to *Sordello*. Here is another "soul's tragedy," studied and wrought out with a marvellous painstaking that nothing but motives of the highest order could inspire. It seems that the thought occurred to Browning, on finding *Sordello* in Dante's *Purgatory*, to find out and explain how he came there, being neither doomed to the Inferno nor fit for Paradise, in which Palma, "passion's votaress," has been placed. For Dante himself does not, I believe, clear the matter up, while he seems to look on *Sordello* with peculiar interest, and finds in Mantua a link between him and Virgil. Another object seems to have been to represent the silver current in Dante himself, the vein of philosophic meditation in the great poet. A comparison of Browning with Dante in this respect would furnish rich materials for a separate paper. The task then was here to explain

¹ Cf. *Sludge*, p. 215 :

"All I believed is true!
I am able, yet
All I want to get," &c.—Vol. iv. 165.

how a soul, gifted with high imaginative powers, nourished in solitude and communion with Nature, and favoured with opportunities, should miss them all and prove abortive in the last crisis. Disraeli wrote his *Contarini Fleming* to illustrate the development of the poet's soul, a subject the interest of which he said was immortal. *Sordello* is surely a most extraordinary and unique achievement in this direction. If the reader is willing to undergo *Sordello*, if I may so express myself; if his brain can endure the fatigue of gazing into and through and beyond those lines with a prolonged and often renewed patience, he will find himself in a scene of enchantment. A delicate humour flickers about this poem from the first, and relieves the long toil of the way. With so keen a perception of the dualism of the soul and the contrasts of life Browning necessarily has a great fund of humour,¹ which is, however, employed with an artistic economy.

In passing, one may note that in another study of a soul's failure, the piece entitled *A Soul's Tragedy*, and which is a study of a mean and self-deceiving egotist, the inherent repulsiveness of the subject is wonderfully relieved by the hearty cynical humour of Ogniben.

4. HIS DRAMATIC METHOD : CONSCIENCE AND ART.

But to return to *Pauline*. There are many other significant features in this work. The author himself says (in 1863) that the piece was his earliest attempt at "poetry always dramatic in principle and utterances of so many imaginary persons not his own." The union of Conscience and Art, of analysis and synthesis, of psychology and word-painting, is remarkable. From another source² we learn that he had produced a quantity of verses while a mere child, and that he had projected a variety of soul histories similar to *Pauline*. The question suggests itself, On what grounds was this dramatic method so early fixed on, as it has been so persistently used by the poet through his whole work? Perhaps some answer to the question may already be found in this early work. Reviewing it in mature years, Browning speaks of it with repugnance, but only, as I understand, on artistic grounds. Speaking as he constantly does of poetry under the analogy of Painting (not music or singing), he says this "preliminary sketch" is deficient in "draughtsmanship and handling." In fact, in reading this poem it is difficult or impossible to form a distinct conception of the character of the young poet who is supposed to utter this "confession," so do the contents overpower the form, and in fact break it

¹ See especially the story of St. John and his portrait at end of Bk. iii

² Mr. Gosse, in *Century*, Dec. 1880.

up. This young poet seems to be a fusion of Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Browning; we cannot see him through the richness of his clothing. It appears to me that Browning became early aware that he had to struggle against the overpowering force of his own fancy, and that the only way in which he could deal with the wealth of material which flowed in upon him, was to distribute it among forms of his own invention and observation. He felt that give him canvas, he had wealth enough to furnish forth an endless series of human forms, and that he could never get out what he had to say by any other means. In natures so overstocked as it were with æsthetic capacity as Browning's, the great difficulty is to get room enough to react in, and the Dramatic form, including the Parable, alone gives the room required. In this early poem, notwithstanding the lavish outpouring of thought on the subject, he is compelled to resort to the device of assuming the other person (Pauline herself), and criticizing in French prose his own English verse.

THE SELF-CRITIC. EFFORT AFTER CONDENSATION OF THOUGHT
AND EXPRESSION.

Here we have a clear evidence of that struggle of the critical faculty with the creative, or the man with the poet, which is so marked elsewhere. Browning finds fault with himself¹ because of the want of condensation of ideas and of expression in *Pauline*, which is a marvel of condensation; and it is just for this quality that the British public has complained of him ever since. In *Sordello* not only are prepositions and relatives and other links of speech dispensed with, and ambiguous phrases or words used, but abrupt transitions constantly occur from one train of thought to another without any apparent clue being given. It is like following the doubling of a hare or skimming of a swallow.²

The difficulty of curbing his vast discursiveness within moderate bounds is again exemplified in *Sordello*. While Salinguerra is finely painted as the man of action, the foil to *Sordello*, also Palma and the other characters down to the admirable "Philistine" Naddo, *Sordello* himself is comparatively a hazy figure, because overflowed with the poet's own mind. He seems to be a series of ruminations rather than a man. The other figures are distinct and detached, but the hero seems to swim in a sea of Browningian speculation and fancy. Wherever Browning has a distinctly inferior or simple nature to paint, what sharp and clear detachment is there in his portraits: *e. g.* the characters

¹ *Pauline*, p. 32, note.

² *E. g.* let any one experiment on the first paragraph of *Sordello*, explaining the connection of thought in "hearing," "believing," "beholding."

in *Pippa Passes*, and many in the gallery of *Dramatis Personæ* and *Men and Women*, and the dramas generally. But with more complex or dubious natures which thoroughly interest his curiosity he becomes himself interfused. If he takes time and a large canvas, he so penetrates the subject with himself that the result is occasionally a peculiar dazzle and doubleness on the retina of the spectator. In parts, for example, how detached is *Bp. Blougram*; yet as we proceed with the subtle dialectic his image seems to melt into that of the author. In fact we cannot lose sight of the eager "showman," as he passes from behind this to the other chair, smiling and beckoning to us as the conversation goes on. That piece may consequently be interpreted from several different points of view equally plausible. So in parts Browning seems to overflow *Mr. Sludge*; for it is rather difficult to conceive a man capable quite of the union of opposites, the mean cunning and the profound philosophic spirit ascribed to the "medium." While in a few works the Subject, Browning, stands at arm's length from his Object, it seems to me that all his more important characters are, apart from accidents, distinctly reflections of his own spiritual physiognomy.

5. ON THE WHOLE A SUBJECTIVE POET.

I do not think the greater part of his works are held aloof from him to the extent that Shakespere's dramas are from their reserved author; nor perhaps as are Goethe's. Our poet is as subjective as Lucretius, Dante, or Shelley; we may know what his convictions are upon serious subjects as clearly as if he had written in straightforward prose. But if he had written in prose the same difficulty would have been found in understanding him. It is not possible to Browning to squeeze his thoughts "into a nutshell." His answers to great questions must always be "God's large ones, tardy to condense themselves into a period."¹

But the question suggests itself, In what sense we are to understand that *any* dramatic poetry contains merely the utterance of so many imaginary persons, not the author's? How far, I mean, is it possible for a self-contained Shakespere or an ironical Browning to play the Proteus, if we have once a determined mind to seize him? The distinction of the objective from the subjective poet, of which Browning has treated in a novel manner in his *Essay on Shelley*, is merely, we must remember, a relative or comparative one. It refers to the fact that in some poets more, and others less, of the man appears in the work of the artist. But no man can absolutely hide himself behind his

¹ *Sordello*; cf. *Pacchiarotto*, p. 45.

work; as, on the other hand, no man can fully reveal himself without resorting to some oblique, objective, or dramatic mode of expression. Every work of art is both objective and subjective, and solves the problem of the union of mind and matter. The question therefore is merely one of degree. What is put into the mouth of one of the poet's creations is *his* so far as the substance of the thought is concerned. And if we compare the substance of what he has thus said through his various dramatic masks, with what he has kept silence upon, we may surely arrive at a very fair understanding of the poet's mind and thought. In the case of the most objective poetry we know, the poet is not and cannot be altogether hidden. The poet or poets of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* keep out of sight after they have once invoked the aid of the muse; but it does not follow that we may not collect pretty clearly, from what they have said and what they have held their peace about, their convictions and opinions concerning human life. The difficulty of doing this is of course immensely greater in the case of the great objective or dramatic poets than with those who have directly spoken of what they as individuals have thought and felt.

Let us take the three great Greek tragic poets, Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides. The younger poet is more revealed to us as a man through his work than either of his compeers. Let me remark in passing how Browning himself is illustrated by his relation to these three. He delights of course in them all, but Euripides he seems to love as a brother. The reason must lie, as in his corresponding sympathy with Shelley, in a deep spiritual affinity. And in fact it is the intense humanity of Euripides which makes him so modern and so akin to our poet. When Browning refers to the Greek as

"Our Euripides the human, with his droppings of warm tears,
And his touches of things common, till they rose to touch the spheres,"¹

he is describing himself. He has looked into the eyes of the great Greek and has seen his own reflection. The comparative silence of Browning about Sophocles is perhaps as significant as his enthusiasm for Euripides. Sophocles is considered the faultless poet, as *Andrea del Sarto* the faultless painter. And Browning distinctly prefers in a sense the artistically faulty, but morally great, to the "splendid faultlessness" (to borrow from Tennyson) which is less inspired. I refer, *e. g.*, to the poem on *Andrea del Sarto*, to that on *Old Pictures in Florence*, and to some closing words in the *Essay on Shelley* for the statement of this conviction. It is another central conviction, one of the emphatic points in Browning. We hear from time to time that there are current theories of the

¹ *Balaustion* (see Mrs. Browning's *Wine of Cyprus*).

goal of art as identical simply and solely with the Beautiful. With Browning nothing can satisfy true art short of the morally Good and the absolutely True, or, to speak as he has spoken, with his own seriousness, nothing short of the Divine perfections can be the true ideal to which the artist strives to make his work to correspond.¹

But to return to the distinction of the objective and subjective in poetry. Of modern poets Shakespere is regarded as the very type of the objective, and is so referred to by Browning. It is supposed, that is, that the personality of Shakespere is absorbed or concealed in his dramatic creations. Amidst his marvellous wealth of fancy and thought we do not find that iteration of a few leading ideas which would lead us to say, "These were Shakespere's convictions; here his flowing imagination crystallizes into the forms of personal belief; here the man is discernible through the poetic haze surrounding him." But though we cannot do this, it may be theoretically maintained that the man Shakespere is distinctly revealed in the poet Shakespere, and this both positively and negatively, in what he has left unsaid as well as in what he has expressed. May it not be argued in brief, that we have in Shakespere a man who possessed the vastest intelligence both of the physical and of the metaphysical world; but that contemplation sufficed him, that he felt life to be a profound enigma, was no prophet, had no special burden on his mind with reference to religion, politics, or the conduct of life? His own life confirms this view. Beyond a certain point, if we press our inquiry, we seem to hear again and again the echo of the impressive last words of Hamlet: "*the rest is silence.*" In clear contrast to this reserve of Shakespere is the passionate and outspoken utterance, glowing with personal conviction, on the great matters of religion and social conduct and politics, in such as the great Hebrew poets, and, again, Lucretius and Dante and Shelley. It is our own fault if we do not know what these men thought and felt; the fire of conviction glows in their verse. Equally so is it with Browning. The best way of deciding the matter perhaps is to ask ourselves, Who are the poets that most distinctly impress us with their personality in reading their works, who cannot, if they would, "keep themselves out of view"?²

If these are called for convenience' sake subjective poets, then Browning belongs to the class as distinctly as any that can be named. But the distinction means nothing sharp or absolute. It is a question of degree. And when Browning labels most of his poems as utterances of imaginary persons, not mine," we are at liberty, I

¹ *Essay on Shelley.*

² *Sordello*, p. 3.

believe, to understand this in a paradoxical or ironical sense. In his later works, as far as I know them, the "dramatic" disguise seems very slight. The incidents he seizes upon are parables or ironical pretexts for discussion; and he stands forth, as what he has all along been, a Philosopher-Poet, with a zest for dialectic applied to the highest themes like that of Socrates, and an elasticity of fancy like that of Socrates' disciple.

If we drop the words objective and subjective, and distinguish poets according to the degree in which each is absorbed in his work, a delightful study of this point occurs in *Sordello*. The amiable Eglamor, a sort of small Virgil perhaps, is completely absorbed in his craft, is nothing apart from his verses, as his verses are nothing apart from him. He only exists in what he loves, and when his poetry is killed, he himself is finished and done with. *Sordello*, on the other hand, has the distinct self-consciousness which holds him sharply separate from his works. He finds in his own soul so distinctly the reflection of all beauty and power, that he looks upon all his work as inferior to himself.¹ A certain reserve, therefore, will characterize the poet who knows and delights in the endless resources of his all-reflecting soul. His "power and consciousness and self-delight"² Browning notes as characteristic of Shakespere. With such a poet his works are mere "episodes in his life." As the country people say, "there's plenty more where they came from."

Now *Sordello* is, I believe, our poet himself, except in the accident of his life, the weakness and the failure. I venture at least upon the view that the history of *Sordello* as the history of a soul is that of Browning up to date;³ while the long life-work of the latter proves that he had learned to vanquish by moral energy the moods that enervated his hero.

One of the most remarkable things in Browning is his constant habit of mirroring himself in the minds of other men. This is what the dramatic method really means. What is all that splendid gallery of portraits in *Men and Women*, &c. but a series of pictures in which the accessories, the costume, the surroundings, and the background are contrived with consummate skill; where the illusion is all but perfect; but where no one who gazes at these portraits with close attention will fail to meet the piercing glance and the expression which shines from all, that of the arch-magician, whose creations they are. These are his splendid puppets.

¹ *Sordello*, pp. 21, 97.

² *Bp. Blougram*.

³ I am told that this is confirmed by Mrs. Orr in Preface to F. M. Holland's *Stories from Browning*.

"Love, you saw me gather men and women,
Live or dead, or fashioned by my fancy,
Enter each and all, and use their service,
Speak from every mouth."¹

It can easily, I believe, be shown that dramatic verisimilitude is departed from, and historical perspective neglected, in these wonderful constructions of the poet's genius. Cleon, Karshish, and St. John, *e.g.*, could not live in the first century and the nineteenth at the same time. These men all think our thoughts, that is, Browning's; for he believes that if we would only clear up our thoughts it would be found that we all think essentially alike, that is, as he does. No matter what be his object, he is not content until he has glorified it with the inner light from his own soul. How many faces haunt us from this gallery! Like those plain faces of Dutchmen which follow us from the canvas of Rembrandt, rich with the mystic meaning the master shed upon them, are Browning's unrivalled portraits. As men and women seem taller and nobler after we have been reading Homer, so does human life wear an air of deeper meaning and mystery as we rise from the pages of Browning. Again, he has found himself in the great poets; has insisted that Æschylus, Euripides, Aristophanes, King David, Dante, Shakespere, and others meant what he means; and one would suppose that they must all be grateful to him, for he has certainly shed an additional lustre on them all, and has enabled us to see them better. To take the example that lies nearest to us, do we not feel that we know Shakespere better after listening to his conversation "at the Mermaid"² with Ben Jonson which Browning has reported for us; that at last the Sphinx has spoken, and to good purpose?

6. ANALYSIS OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS IN PAULINE.

But again to revert to *Pauline*. Many intensely interesting spiritual problems are suggested, in connection with the poetic mood and ecstasy. The poem describes a self-consciousness heightened to the last degree, painfully awake, and struggling towards the last secret of existence and "crowning-point of life." It trembles on the border-line of madness; so does the dreamer seem at points about to be unhinged by the violence of contending passions. However, he can always collect himself; he discovers in the extreme of exhaustion rest beneath "some better essence" than the soul's self; reason and faith still anchor him amidst the tempestuous agitation of the sea of fancy. We are reminded here and in many passages of the theory of Plotinus: that Reason (*νοῦς*) both is and knows all things if it knows itself, and conversely it knows

¹ *One Word More*, vol. v. 318.

² *Pacehiarotto*; cf. *House*, *ib.*

itself if it knows the sum total of its objects. Hence self-consciousness consists in the turning of the Subject from the Object which is identical with itself, to itself. It is reflection, self-recovery. We have evidence in Browning of a nature of extraordinary power of self-recovery; but one's brain requires hardening before one can follow him without feeling the effects of excessive stimulation. It is watching the agitated movement of a lark; the lark knows what he is about, and will not lose himself, for his movement is governed by law; but he dazzles and bewilders us. We cannot detect anything morbid or one-sided in Browning. On the contrary, the effect he produces on us is that of a person the magnetism of whose *vis vivida* is too strong for weak nerves, where intense wakefulness positively hurts us when we want to drowse. Ieridge complained of the general hatred to thinking; and Browning, as he walks the streets of London and reads men's blank faces, fears that few will believe his prophecies.¹ What we call dreaming he calls waking earnest; a poet, he says, never dreams.²

7. MORAL CONSCIENCE IN BROWNING'S EARLY POEMS.

But, again, *Pauline*, followed by *Paracelsus*, *Strafford*, *Sordello*, and *Pippa Passes*, are all variations of the theme of Conscience, in the narrower sense in which that word is commonly employed. It is the sense of the dualism of flesh and spirit, of a split between the actual and the ideal or ethical self. The whole problem of conduct consists in the endeavour to heal this schism, to reduce this opposition to a harmony. I should be glad to know where there is a finer body of lofty ethical teaching than in these two volumes. In *Pauline* the keynote is struck. The core of sin is shown to be in self-idolatry, ending in the vitiation and degradation of the spirit. The last hell the spirit can know is isolation, to be shut out from part or lot in humankind. To be unable to love is like the brand of Cain upon the brow. The young poet fastens eagerly upon any symptom of a love still living in his heart which can find an object far beyond rivalry (pp. 18, 23).

Browning, we know, is a close disciple of the mystical apostle St. John. The passage from life to death, from death to life, is the passage between love and hate, hate and love of humankind in the soul.

In *Paracelsus* we have another tragedy of Conscience. The love of Power, and of Knowledge as its means, intoxicates the soul and blinds it through a lifetime to Love. "A being knowing not what Love is—a monstrous spectacle upon the earth" (*Par.*, p. 69). This is the plague-spot in P.—carelessness to human love (p. 67). Love, on the other

¹ *Easter Day*.

² *Fifine*.

hand (in *Aprile*), that is, desire to be at one with each and every form of Beauty and Good in the world, may become enslaved to them, may lose freedom, may fail of constancy, may surrender all distinct purpose, and leave life's work undone. The union of love with knowledge makes the perfect spheric life. This divorce yet reconciliation, this love in strife, has been presented again in the wondrous parable of *Fifine at the Fair*.

Aprile fails because he fixes on the end, and rejects the laborious means of self-realization; *Paracelsus* fails because he fixes upon mere means as if they were ends. Both fail from excess, or ill-regulation of instincts in themselves true and lofty. They both "o'er-pass life's restrictions, and they die." Here again the sobriety and collectedness of the poet impresses; he has been enabled to keep his eye steadily fixed on the great ends of living, undazzled by those splendid temptations of the poetic mind so consummately described.

Pippa Passes contains a series of studies of Conscience relieved by the innocence of *Pippa*, whose sweet and pious song is ever heard from the background.

Strafford, as a drama intended for the stage, naturally contains less didactic; but how fine is the contrast of conscience in *Strafford* and *Pym*! *Strafford*, a magnificent spirit worshipping a delusive ideal in King Charles, and wrecked thereby; *Pym* bowing before a loftier ideal than either the king or the friend of his youth, viz. England herself, and standing in moral majesty at the end.

In *Sordello* we have the working of Conscience in a soul whose ambition is in extravagant disproportion to its physical powers and means, and whose temptation is at every crisis to seek pleasure in the picture of willing and doing rather than in willing and doing itself. It is a fine study of a delicate "eudaemonism" which counterfeits genuine conduct. *Sordello* can purchase the pleasure of decided action at a cheaper rate than by acting; he revels in the consciousness of Will, yet finds that at the critical moment his Will won't act. He cannot raise his judgment of what is right into an imperative which *must* be obeyed. He falls at last a victim to Conscience. There is an apt word of Rousseau's which applies to *Sordello*: "The weaker the body is, the more it commands; the stronger it is, the more it obeys." The thought is emphatic in Dante. His last effort against himself succeeds, but it kills him. Browning has often set before us the banefulness of that compromise in which we seek to content our desires with only a half-satisfaction.¹ To find a keen æsthetic delight in imagined good is very different from enjoying the good itself. *Sordello* remains "a tree

¹ *The Statue and the Bust.*

that covets fruitage, yet tastes never itself, itself."¹ The first step to worthy living is the conquest of egoism, a most refined and insidious form of which is here faithfully exhibited. Sordello fails because he cannot fit his great thoughts with corresponding deeds. Salinguerra, on the other hand, who acts without thinking, deteriorates into a sort of unmeaning puppet. Thought without action, action without thought, such is the tragic contrast of different sorts of men.

8. OBJECTIONS TO SPIRITUAL ANALYSIS ANSWERED.

Here, perhaps, an objection or two may be noticed which Browning has answered. In the course of that delightful meditation which he pursues in *propria persona* on the palace step at Venice,² he tells us in effect that before we can attempt to apply remedies to the sorrowing souls of men, we must try to understand their souls. He most amusingly satirizes the quackery often observable in the didactic world. Amidst the great desert and waste of human suffering men appear with a smiling self-conceit, assuring us that they have the nostrum, the panacea; that there are plenty of founts about, that they have some pretty madrigal about a dewdrop inside a mugwort, and so on. People are only increasing ignorance tenfold by talking in this way, says Browning. The only method to get at the waters that will refresh and comfort is to strike the hard rock of fact.³ We have all of us a great deal to learn by trial and experience before we can be of use to others. We are not on the threshold of social science yet. Preachers, therefore, ought not to speak down to men from a higher level, but simply compare notes with them and interchange experiences, or report what they have seen and heard. This is how Browning has preached to his generation, and has earned the love of many and perhaps imparted the gift of seeing to a few. The defence, then, of psychic analysis is that the development of the soul is the one serious and all-embracing study.⁴ Strictly speaking, all else is hearsay, abstraction, unreality.

But, again, there is a common prejudice against these studies. Men praise action rather than thought, Salinguerras rather than Sordellos. But Browning thinks it good to try to bring thought and action, seeing and doing, into closer correspondence. By way of change, let R. W. Emerson answer this objection; the greatest American man of letters coincides with our countryman on so many points. "That hankering after an overt or practical effect seems to me an apostasy. In

¹ Cf. *Effie*, § 102: "the lust to seem the thing it cannot be."

² *Sordello*, p. 97 *sqq.*

³ The allusion to Moses is repeated in *One Word More*.

⁴ Dedication of *Sordello* to M. Milsand.

good earnest I am willing to spare this most unnecessary deal of doing. Life wears to me a visionary face.¹ Hardest, roughest action is visionary also. It is but a choice between soft and turbulent dreams. People disparage knowing and intellectual life, and urge doing. I am very content with knowing, if only I could know. That is an august entertainment, and would suffice me a great while. To know a little would be worth the expense of this world. I hear always the law of Adrasteia, 'that every soul which had acquired any truth should be safe from harm until another period.'"²

We are here, says Emerson, not so much to act as to be acted upon. We "watch construct an engine;" we are here on the potter's wheel, says Browning.³

9. HOPEFULNESS OF THE POET.

But in these soul-tragedies on which we have been dwelling it is important to note that they none of them end in the silence of despair. In *Pauline* the young poet is brought through penitence to a state of mind in which he feels assured of redemption through Divine loves mediately made known to him through human love; his "last state is happy." Paracelsus dies, "stooping into a dark tremendous sea of cloud," but blessed with the ministry of human love, and confident that as he is known to God in all his good as well as evil, so he will "emerge one day" to the view of men. And Sordello in his last agony of self-conflict fails only to succeed, takes up his cross and loses to find himself:

"A triumph lingering in the wide eyes,
Wider than some spent swimmer's if he spies
Help from above in his extreme despair."

God will not resign his progeny; Sordello⁴ may be absorbed in him of whom he was the forerunner, but cannot be lost. Here we touch upon that deepest debt we owe to our beloved teacher. He is the very prophet of Hope. What other man do we know of in our time who had the courage, only to be justified by an inspired faith or higher reason, to stand in the Morgue at Paris, and, gazing on three suicidal corpses, to say, "I thought and think their sin's atoned"?

"My own hope is a sun will pierce
The thickest cloud earth ever stretched;
That after Last returns the First,
Though a wide compass round be fetched;
That what began best, can't end worst,
Nor what God blessed once, prove accurst."⁵

¹ "Action, 'tis a trick of the senses."—*Ibid.*

² *Sordello*, p. 104; *R. Ben Ezra*.

⁴ pp. 15, 16.

⁵ *Essay on Character*.

⁶ *Apparent Failure*.

II. POINTS OF ART AND ÆSTHETIC.

1. USE OF LANGUAGE.

I PASS ON to a subject on which I should like to say a few words, viz. the supposed unintelligibility or extreme difficulty of the poet's language. It is impossible not to feel that a thick film interposes itself between this great man and his generation, a sorrow both to him and to them. There can be only three general explanations of this peculiarity. Readers are obtuse and inattentive, or the writer is not a clear thinker, or, lastly, the difficulty lies in the subject itself. On the first I will say nothing. On the second I would remark that an obscure thinker is very different from a thinker on obscure subjects. Browning is the latter, not the former. Let me take the last explanation, and assume that the nature of our poet's themes is such that not only is it impossible to make them clearer than he has made them, but that he has wrought marvels in depicting the scenery and events of the soul. But when we reflect what such a phrase as the "scenery of the soul" means,—all that crossing and recrossing of shapes in the theatre of the phantasy; fears meeting hopes, spectres confronting realities, constant advances, retreats, shocks in that eternal conflict in which the soul is split asunder, as at once actor, sufferer, spectator,—what art can adequately imitate or represent this endlessly repeated Drama?

We are not accustomed to watch this scene, we cannot endure the fatigue and pain. And when a magical artist comes to watch and then to represent and report for us, it is at first only a degree less painful than confronting the reality in our own soul. Wordsworth, I think, said of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* that it was "like the crossing of flies in the air," and threw the book to the end of the room. I suppose it would not be difficult to find a considerable number of persons who have in like manner given up *Sordello* in despair. But this does not prove much so long as there are others who have taken up *Sordello*, made merry over it, laid it down, taken it up again, gone on with it, tried back, gone forward again, repeating this process many times, until they have come to feel that no more truthful and therefore more fascinating book was ever penned. Browning will not in the end be found utterly unintelligible by any who have felt it either a pleasure or a duty to study the mechanism and working of their own soul. I suppose there is a deep-rooted general aversion from such study; I need not stay to inquire from what causes. In short, the poet has had to create an interest in what lies nearest to us, yet is most neglected, and the result is what it is. Besides all this, there is an extraordinary condensation of thought and expression throughout, perhaps unparalleled in literature.

It is a symbolic or spiritual shorthand. Every kind of ellipse and brachylogy is used.

2. CONCEPTION OF THE POET'S FUNCTION.

There are other deep-seated prejudices which our poet has had to encounter. What is a poet, and what is his business? People are ready with their answer. It seems that most expect of him much the same that was expected of the bard in ancient times. He must amuse the after-dinner time of his betters. He must be melodious, he must flatter us and our ideal of living, he must charm us by a succession of images which more or less reflect ourselves and our time.¹ There are conventions, in short, in which our pleasures are interested, and if the bard ignores them we think we have a right to denounce, ignore, or cheapen him as much as we can; or at least to mutter, "Too bad! to foist upon us this rugged, unmelodious stuff!"

3. MUSIC IN POETRY.

One of our friends remarked that Browning has "failed to reach continuous levels of musical phrasing." By the way, is life and thought "a continuous level of musical phrasing"? If not, and poetry is a representation of life, why expect the poet to pursue "a sempiternal path with dance and song"? However, there is always instruction to be gained from the consideration of fair objections, and I believe the fair consideration of this fair objection of want of musicalness may lead us towards the apprehension of Browning's peculiarities.

POETS OF THE EAR AND OF THE EYE.

Here let me offer briefly a distinction of poets which may be useful for our present purpose. All poetry may be classified according to its form or its contents. Formal classification is easy, but of little use. When we have distinguished compositions as dramatic, lyrical, or characterized a poet in like manner, we have done little. What we want to ascertain is the peculiar quality of the imaginative stuff with which he plastically works, and to appreciate its worth. This is always a great task, but one particularly necessary in the case of Browning, because the stuff in which he has wrought is so novel in the poet's hands. Psychology itself is comparatively a new and modern study, as a distinct science; but a psychological poet, who has made it his business to clothe psychic

¹ The world wants "not so much to play the fool, as learn their lesson in his school."—*Sordello*, pp. 61, 67. Cf. *Fifine*, § 75, *Last Words*. *Pacchiarotto*: "Ah, the irremissible sin of poets who please themselves, not us!"

abstractions "in sights and sounds," is entirely a novel appearance in literature.

Now that phrase "clothing in sights and sounds" may yield us the clue to the classification we are seeking. The function of artists, that is, musicians, poets in the narrower sense, and painters, is to clothe Truth in sights and sounds for the hearing and seeing of us all. Their call to do this lies in their finer and fuller æsthetic faculty. The sense of hearing and that of seeing stand in polar opposition, and thus a natural scale offers itself by which we may rank and arrange our artists. At the one end of the scale is the acoustic artist, *i. e.* the musician. At the other end of the scale is the optic artist, the painter and sculptor. Between these, and comprising both these activities in his own, is the poet, who is both acoustic and optic artist. He translates the sounds of the world, both external and internal,—the tumult of storms, the murmur of waves, the *susurrus* of the woodland, the tinkling of brooks, the throbbing of human hearts, the cries of all living creatures; all those groans of pain, stammers of desire, shrieks of despair, yawns even of languor, which are ever breaking out of the heart of things; and beside all this, the hearsay, commonplace, proverbial lore of the world. He turns these into melodies which shall be caught up by those who listen. In short, he converts by his alchemy the common stuff of pain and of joy into music. But he is optic as well as acoustic; that is, he calls up at the same time by his art a procession of images which march or dance across the theatre of the listener's fancy. Now the question of classification on this scheme comes to this, Does the particular poet who invites our attention deal more with the æsthesis of the ear or with that of the eye? Does he more fill our ear with sweet tunes or our fancy with shapes and colours? Does he compel us to listen and shut our eyes, or to open our eyes wide and dispense with all but the faintest musical accompaniment? What sense, in short, does he mainly address himself to? Goethe said that he was a "seeing" man; W. von Humboldt, the great linguist, that he was a "listening" man. The influence of Milton's blindness on his poetry was noticed by Lessing. The short-sightedness of Wieland has also been detected in his poetry.

If we apply these tests to Browning there can be, I think, no doubt as to the answer. He is, in common with all poets, both musician and painter, but much more the latter than the former. He is never for a moment the slave of his ear, if I may so express it. We know that he has, on the contrary, the mastery of music. But music helps and *supports* his imagination, never controls it. Music is to Browning an *inarticulate* revelation of the truth of the supersensual world, the

"earnest of a heaven."¹ He is no voluptuary in music. Music is simply the means by which the soul wings its way into the azure of spiritual theory and contemplation. Take only *Saul* and *Abt Vogler* in illustration. *Saul* is a magnificent interpretation of the old theme, a favourite with the mystics, that evil spirits are driven out by music. But in this interpretation it is not the mere tones, the thrumming on the harp, it is the religious movement of the intelligence, it is the truth of Divine love throbbing in every chord, which constitutes the spell. And so in *Abt Vogler*; the abbot's instrument is only the means whereby he strikes out the light of faith and hope within him. Not to dwell upon this point, I would only say that it seems clear that Browning has the finest acoustic gifts, and could, if he had chosen, have scattered musical *bons-bons* through every page. But he has printed no "versus inopes rerum, nugæque canoræ" (*Hor. ad Pis.*). He has had higher objects in view, and has dispensed better stuff than that which lingers in the ear, and tends to suppress rather than support the higher activity of thought.

When for a moment he shuts his eyes, and falls purely into the listening or "musing" mood, he becomes the instrument of a rich deep music, breaking out of the heart of the unseen world, as in the Dirge of unfaithful Poets in *Paracelsus*, or the Gipsy's Incantation in the *Flight of the Duchess*, or the Meditation at the crisis of Sordello's temptation (p. 206).

When the keen inquisitive intelligence is in its full waking activity there grows "more of the words" and thought, and "less of the music," to invert a phrase of the poet's.² The melody ceases, the rhythm is broken, as in all intense, earnest conversation. At times only the tinkle of the pairing rhymes, of which Browning has made a most witty use, reminds us that we are called to partake a mood in which commonplace associations are melting into the ideal. I believe the economy of music is a necessity of Browning's art; and it would be only fair, if those who attack him on this ground would consider how far thought of such quality as his admits of being chanted, or otherwise musically accompanied. In plain words the problem is, how far the pleasures of sound and of sense can be united in poetry; and it will be found in every case that a poet sacrifices something either to the one or to the other. Browning has said something in his arch way on this point.³ In effect, he remarks, Italian prose can render a simple thought more sweetly to the ear than either Greek or English verse. It seems clear from many other of his critical remarks that he

¹ *Pauline*, p. 16; cf. *Effie*, § 61.

² *Flight of the Duchess*.

³ Preface to the translation of the *Agamemnon*.

considers the demand for music in preference to thought in poetry as the symptom of a false taste.

Browning's poetry is to be gazed at, rather than listened to and recited, for the most part. It is infinitely easier to listen for an hour to spiritual music than to fix one's whole attention for a few minutes on a spiritual picture. In the latter act of mind we find a rich musical accompaniment distracting, while a slight musical accompaniment is probably helpful. And perhaps we may characterize Browning's poetry as a series of spiritual pictures with a faint musical accompaniment.

For illustration by extreme contrast Milton may be compared with Browning. Milton was a great hearsay poet, Browning repeats no hearsay. In reading Milton the difficulty is to keep up the mental tension where there is so little thought, strictly speaking. With Browning the highest tension is exacted.

4. ROBERT BROWNING PRE-EMINENTLY THE SEER.

He is pre-eminently the looker, the seer, the "maker-see";¹ the reporter, the painter of the scenery and events of the soul. And if the sense of vision is our noblest, and we instinctively express the acts of intelligence in terms drawn from physical vision, the poet who leans most towards the "*Seer of Power and Love in the absolute, Beauty and Goodness in the concrete*,"² takes the higher rank. This is no matter for bigotry of taste. Singers and seers, musicians and reporters, and reproducers of every degree, who have something to tell us or to show us of the "world as God has made it, where all is beauty," we have need of all. But of singers there are many, of seers there are few, that is all.³

5. THEORIES OF THE POETIC FUNCTION.

But Browning's own utterances on the calling and functions of the poet require our careful attention. I have already referred to his lofty ideal of the poet. Let us pursue this subject a little further. There can be no doubt that Browning has ever considered that the poet, in his conception of the poet's office, stands highest in call and rank amongst his fellow-men. He includes the seer, priest, prophet, king, philosopher in himself. He lives in communion with the Highest, that he may make known His will and law to men. If the poet proves unfaithful to his call and charge, this may well excite the sorrow and

¹ *Sordello*, pp. 105, 108.

² *Essay on Shelley*.

³ It will be noticed that in the *Essay on Shelley* Browning speaks only of the Maker (or objective poet) and of the Seer (or subjective poet); of the mere singer or melodist he has nothing to say at all.

indignation of mankind. If he falls from his allegiance to God and Truth, this is the very acme of tragedy. "Thy revolt, methinks, is like another fall of man."¹

Perhaps among our other productions we shall arrive at a 'Browning Catechism.' If so, one of the sections might run as follows:—On the idea and functions of the Poet. *Q.* What is the rank of the Poet in general? *A.* He is "earth's essential king," for he comprehends in himself Humanity.² *Q.* How may Poets be classified? *A.* As Objective and Subjective. *Q.* What is the Objective Poet? *A.* It is he who reproduces the phenomena of Nature and Man with a view to the apprehension of the multitude, or the many below him. *Q.* What is the Subjective Poet? *A.* It is he who embodies his perceptions of Nature and Man with reference to the One above him, the supreme and absolute Intelligence. *Q.* What is the peculiar value of Objective Poetry? *A.* It is the fresh translation of the truth of the world into forms intelligible to the aggregate human mind. This truth needs to be reverted to and relearned in every age. *Q.* What is the peculiar value of Subjective Poetry? *A.* The Subjective Poet teaches us the exacter, the Divine and universal, meaning of that which is already known of Nature and Man. This is the ultimate requirement of every age. *Q.* What is false poetry? *A.* False poetry is that which is neither objective nor subjective, neither true to the perceptions of mankind in general nor to the Poet himself. *Q.* Name two poets as types of the objective and subjective respectively. *A.* Shakespere and Shelley.³ *Q.* Sketch the life-development of the true Bard. *A.* The true Bard identifies himself with all the varied life of humanity in its individuals. He begins as an epoist, *i. e.* as the historian or painter of men and women as they are; standing apart from his own creations. Next by a process of analysis he passes from the show and seeming of human lives, or from characters as fixed, to character as it is in process. Assistance and opposition unfold and reveal men, and the process will be set before the audience in dramatic forms. The drama represents the result of this analysis. Next, the Poet will dive still deeper into the essence of the soul. He will stand upon the results gained by the soul's experience in this world, and will launch into the pure ideal world, and construct the complete future man as in freedom from sense he rises towards perfect union with God.⁴ *Q.* Has Browning accomplished this programme? *A.* It is believed by many that he has done so. *Q.* What is the cause

¹ *Paracelsus*, p. 85; *Pauline*, pp. 3, 4; *Sordello*, p. 108. Cf. Prof. Corson, p. 306.

² *Sordello*, p. 167; cf. p. 101.

³ *Essay on Shelley*.

⁴ *Essay on Shelley*, p. 10; *Sordello*, p. 170.

of Browning's so-called obscurity in his greatest works? *A.* He has deliberately chosen to speak to his audiences in hints or half-words, leaving the rude explicit details to be filled up in thought by them.¹ This is a compliment to his readers, or rather it is a "brother's" mark of confidence. *Q.* How should Poets be ranked? *A.* According to their possession of the highest faculty. *Q.* What is that highest faculty? *A.* The vision of Power and Love in God, and of Beauty and Good in God's world; and the power to connect these two, or to show the correspondence of the World with God. *Q.* Is the true Poet a Realist or an Idealist? *A.* He is both in one. He extracts the ideal from the real, and this ideal becomes again the real in a further stage of progress. *Q.* What is the true principle of criticism as applied to a Poet? *A.* We should judge him by his highest attainment. The most perfect art does not stand so high as the undeveloped moral ideal.²

6. THEORIES OF ÆSTHETIC AND ART.

There are in *Sordello*³ further glimpses of that severe and lofty ideal of artistic effort which Browning early set up for himself, and which he has consistently pursued.

On the relation of perception, thought, and language he holds views which, well considered, are destructive of many wide-spread fallacies. It is common to confuse language with thought, and thought with things, whereas Browning holds, in common with thinkers of his order, that language is but a poor reflection of thought, and thought at best an imperfect presentment of personality and life. In *coenaesthesia* or *synaesthesia*, i. e. in the simultaneous perception of an Unity or organic Whole, we are at one with the Truth. A tone tells us more of the immediate truth than any word or word-combination can do; and tone-combinations or Music reach more to the heart of things than any possible syntax of words. When we seek to convert poetic æsthesia into language, we must break up the organic Whole perceived into its constituent parts, and these parts must then be recombined in the syntax of speech. The result is that much is lost from the force and fulness of the original perception. The mass of readers, painfully piecing together its *disjecta membra*, cannot recover the unity of the poet's thought. They "recognize no jot as he intends."⁴ The careful consideration of this point gives the deepest explanation of the difficulty of Browning's language. If all articulate expression of what the poet sees and feels is a narrowing and contracting of that seen and felt,

¹ *Essay on Shelley*, p. 171.

² *Ib.*

³ *Sordello*, pp. 59, 60; *Paracelsus*, p. 92; *Fine*, § 61.

⁴ *Sordello*, p. 61.

compared with the inarticulate expression, he must try to surmount the difficulty by a suggestive mode of using words analogous to the mode in which Turner or D. Cox employed colours. In both cases we must bring to the canvas or to the page an awakened conscience for Nature and the fact, otherwise the one presents a smear of colour and the other a haze of words. After all that can be said, there are, no doubt, obstinate superstitions on this point. People imagine that thought which cannot be definitely named and labelled is either non-existent or of no value; and conversely, that if we have a thought, it can be represented in current forms. But this is only true of the poorest part of our thought; the best part, viz. immediate, mystic, æsthetic experience of the truth of life, finds language a cumbrous vehicle at best. If it were otherwise poetic art would have exhausted itself. Sculpture did exhaust itself as a means of expression some 2000 years ago, because sculpture deals with the abstraction and the form; poetry like that of Browning's cannot exhaust itself, because it draws from the inexhaustible fountain of life itself. The great poet produces new creations in language. Once his superiority ascertained, the business of the grammarian is to take notes of him, not to lecture him. And so with the critic. It follows that language contracting thought, as thought contracts perception, the poet in whose soul perception broods "whole and unexpressed" is greater than his works can ever represent him. From true works

"escapes there still
Some proof, the singer's proper life was 'neath
The life his song exhibits, this a sheath
To that; a passion and a knowledge far
Transcending these, majestic as they are,
Smouldered; his lay was but an episode
In the bard's life."¹

Let us apply this to Browning himself. In this sense, and only in this sense, as far as I can see, is he concealed behind his works; that they are imperfect transcripts of a nature "by far the richest of our time."²

It follows also that in the exercise of thought proper, as distinguished from passive surrender of the mind to truth, we remove from the truth and pass through a stage of falsehood on the way to a higher apprehension of the truth in a more universal form. Thus Browning uses the paradox: "the thought of Eglamor least like a thought and yet a false one."³ The realm of poetic conceits and of opinions, and fancies born of the observation of the accidents rather than of essences, is the

¹ *Sordello*, p. 97.

² J. R. Lowell.

³ *Sordello*, p. 186; cf. "a fable, therefore truth," *Fifine*.

region through which souls are pursuing their "pilgrim's progress" towards a better region. "Divest mind of e'en thought," says the poet again, "and lo, God's unexpress'd will draws above us."¹ I believe the doctrine recently set forth with so much brilliance by the popular German philosopher Von Hartmann, that the Unconscious is more in our life than the Conscious, is so far in Browning. It has been a neglected side of truth. May I say in passing that Browning's thought, while apparently unfamiliar in England, is in close affinity at points with the great German masters in philosophy, although I think we have been informed he was not in early life a student of them. Our friend Mr. Bury has pointed out affinities to Hegel, and it would be strange if there were not affinities to one of the vastest of spiritual thinkers. But the chief reason of this affinity is, I believe, that Hegel absorbed the mystics into himself; and it has been said that he hunted with the hounds of Meister Eckhardt, who lived many centuries before him. There is a vein of thought, therefore, in Browning, who has also absorbed the mystics, running parallel to that of Hegel. But from the leading principle of Hegel's system, viz. the identity of thought and being leading to the consequence that by an act of thought we can grasp the essence of being, Browning seems as wide as the poles asunder. On the whole, in his lofty idealism and his passionate belief in the freedom of the soul and the vocation of man, Browning is in sympathy with the noble-minded Fichte; but he is, I need not say, free from the extravagance of Fichte in denying the objective existence of the world.

7. SPIRITUALITY OF BROWNING.

Perhaps this is a suitable place to notice a criticism passed by Browning on a certain falsity of thought he detects in certain popular poetry of our time. It is very characteristic of the man, and proceeds from that intense spirituality which instinctively rejects any attempt to derive mind from matter, or subordinate the freedom of the soul to the greatness of external Nature. Thus Eglamor's thought least like a thought was,

"Man shrinks to nought
If matched with symbols of immensity,
Must quail forsooth before a quiet sky
Or sea, too little for their quietude."

The thought is specious only, says Browning. Why indeed should the soul quail before so many square miles of sky, or so many cubic miles of water? Do we not know that all grandeur and beauty

¹ *Sordello*, p. 169.

happens in the soul, and nowhere else?¹ and why should the soul be cowed by its own imaginings? Now upon this same weak "thoughtling" Browning pounces in *Pacchiarotto*. As a sample of what passes for thought in popular poetry, he sarcastically cites this sentiment:

"What is a man beside a mount?"²

I am afraid this is the kind of thoughtling we have all had in our time beneath the shadow of the Matterhorn, unaware how childish it was till our Mentor came by. However, I recollect an American on the Riffel, who said he did not see what there was to stare at in all those heaps of snow and rock, and that he could look down from a height in his own country on a dozen thriving townships, with their cultivated fields. Possibly he was a true disciple.

Then in *Fifine* Browning banters Byron in a most amusing way. There is a noted passage in *Childe Harold*, learnt by heart, I believe, at most schools, beginning "Roll on, thou deep and dark blue ocean, roll,"³ and reflecting poor Eglamor's sentiment. Byron personifies the Sea, and makes man its sport and contemptible plaything. And Browning tells Childe Harold that he is a very childish childe, and that he has written great nonsense and bad grammar into the bargain. Common sense

"taught that ocean might be blue,
And rolling and much more, and yet the soul have too
Its touch of God's own flame, which He may so expand
'Who measured the waters i' the hollow of His hand,'
That ocean's self shall dry, turn dew-drop in respect
Of all triumphal fire, matter with intellect
Once fairly matched; bade him who egged on hounds to bay
Go curse, i' the poultry yard, his kind; 'there let him lay'
The swan's one addled egg; which yet shall put to use
Rub breast-bone warm against, so many a sterile goose."⁴

In general, I may remark, how healthy are Browning's critical principles as we may extract them from his writings from first to last. In poetry he says that strength must come before sweetness. He thinks the earlier ideal of Apollo, as the Divine Hunter with bow and arrow,⁵ the brother of Artemis, is a better ideal than the later and softer one of the half feminine Apollo with the lyre. In the same way he quotes the *καρτερώτατον βίλος* of Pindar as the true description of Song.⁶ Those of our friends who will deal with Browning's taste in painting and sculpture and music will doubtless show us how self-consistent are all his judgments on art.

¹ "No such bad place to happen in."—Lotze, *Asthetik*. ² p. 238.
³ clxxix. ⁴ *Fifine*, p. 81; cf. "quack-quack" in *Pacchiarotto*, p. 45.
⁵ *Sordello*, p. 63. ⁶ *Pacchiarotto*, p. 44.

III. BROWNING AS RELIGIOUS PHILOSOPHER.

ONE of our friends has asked the question, Of what consequence to us is the philosophy of a poet? I reply that in the case of Browning it seems of the first consequence to understand his philosophy, his religion, or whatever we choose to call his serious thought. To attempt to study him while ignoring this seems to go against his own canons of criticism; it is like studying the Hebrew prophets for their poetry and antiquarian lore, and anything and everything except their divine and moral doctrine. I presume that it is clear by this time that the core and life of Browning's poetry is Conviction upon the most serious subjects that have occupied the attention of mankind. His work is just as much the expression of his faith as any other kind of good works. It is to him philanthropical work.¹ Any doctrine of "art for art's sake" finds, I believe, not the slightest encouragement in his writings. One of our first tasks as students must therefore be to disengage and detach and exhibit as far as we can this element of faith and of religious speculation, which is the very stuff of all his multiform and many-coloured creations. There are one or two points here that have not been noticed as yet, so far as I am aware.

1. BROWNING A MYSTIC.

In the first place, it seems to me that Browning cannot be properly understood unless we refer him to the fellowship of thinkers, to which, by the whole turn of his mind and of his studies, he belongs. He is distinctly a Mystic. He stands in the line of those illustrious thinkers whom we designate Platonists, Neo-Platonists, and middle-age mystics in general. Especially he appears early in life to have lived with the mystics and mages of the Pre-Reformation period. The Abt Tritheim and his pupils C. Agrippa and Paracelsus, Pietro of Abano, and in the next century G. Bruno,² Jacob Boehme, and others, were all profound men of powerful imagination, who comprehended in their scope both imagination and science, in fact all that was known. They, living in a twilight time of transition, embraced the truth of God and man and nature in an indissoluble unity. During the later centuries we have learned by the use of the logical organ to sharply separate and hold asunder elements of our knowledge which are really at one in our consciousness. We have become so intoxicated with the successful use of

¹ *Sordello*, p. 99 sqq.

² G. Bruno the martyr should be mentioned for his principle of the coincidence of extreme opposites, which is so marked in Browning's writings. Hamann, the mystical friend of Herder, said that he found more in this principle than in all the rest of philosophy together.

what we call our scientific method and the magnificent results to which it has led us, that we have been blind to the injury we were doing to another part of our spiritual life. The abstract habit of thought has been pushed at last in some instances into extreme falsehood. Men have come to speak of the "conflict of science with religion," which is an entirely false thought. Science is the child of religious wonder, and science will never go on without an impulse from religion. Now the mystical teaching in general, and our great poet's in particular, furnishes a powerful protest against this one-sidedness of modern thought. The exertion of power in the intelligence is simple insanity without the inspiration of love; therefore the scientific man, if true to himself, falls back on religion, just as the religious man must ever go on to know, because love is waste without power. When we talk of conflict of science and religion, we are merely setting up puppet abstractions to play or show in our fancy. In God, our faith, our highest reason assures us, Light and Love form an inseparable Unity. It is the infirmity of our thought which sets them asunder. This is the mystical position. I feel that I must be blunt, because I must be brief. But I cannot but feel that Browning will be much better understood if he be compared with the mystics.¹

What then is the great distinction between mystical and ordinary thought? People are apt to associate weakness and extravagance with the Mystic; but I am speaking of the true Mystic, not of the peculiarities of particular men who have passed by that name. There is not a spot of superstitious rust or egotistic vice to be discovered on the clear bright blade of Browning's intelligence. Take *Mr. Sludge the Medium* as an illustration. In that fine study we find the sharpest detective eye for all the ridiculous vices which lodge in the minds of the vain and weak, along with the profound mystical recognition of the wisdom that lies in folly, the truth disguised in falsehood.

2. DISTINCTION OF THE MYSTIC AND THE LOGICIAN.

Ordinary thought is analytic, separative; mystical thought is synthetic. Ordinary thought holds asunder things which it perceives to differ; mystical thought closes the gulf and recovers itself in the apprehension of a higher unity. Ordinary thought rests in opposition, and the ordinary man only feels and relishes himself in the sense of opposition; the mystic is not happy till he has found himself at one with all

¹ See Rev. R. A. Vaughan's *Hours with the Mystics*, 3rd Ed. 1880. Perhaps I may name Balzac's study of mysticism in *Séraphita*. There are some useful points of comparison between the author of the *Human Comedy* and Browning in other respects.

from which he differs. In theology ordinary thought dwells upon the polar opposition between man and God. He in the height of heaven and power, man in the depth of earthly weakness and sin. But the mystic sees that love solves this opposition; he insists upon the junction of the Divine with the human, upon the indwelling of God in the soul. His central theological idea is the Incarnation, conceived not so much under the limitations of space and time, as an eternal spiritual verity. Now both these veins of thought run through the Bible. On the whole, the Old Testament speaks of God in the popular dialect, as does the Gospel. The deeper vein is not readily intelligible by the common people. But in St. John and St. Paul we recognize profound mystics. St. John may be called a pure mystic; he does not use the analytic method at all. St. Paul is both a dialectician and a mystic; and it is in the latter character that he has had so profound an influence upon Christendom. The points of controversy in his writings are now difficult to grasp because we have no longer the same conditions of thought among us; but his mystical principles are universally acceptable, and every age afresh illustrates. Divine love is the solution of all difference and opposition. Ordinary thought dwelt and still dwells upon the opposition of Jew and Greek, and on many other social distinctions of place and time; St. Paul taught that for the spiritual man such distinctions were already obsolete, and that all were one in Christ Jesus. The same distinction of two modes of thought has run through Christendom ever since. There have always been the thinkers who have seen that the progress of truth means conflict; always the smaller party who have seen that it means reconciliation. War and Love, opposition and unity in opposition, these make life. The mystic or comprehensive thinker is he who recognizes and exhibits simultaneously both these principles. Browning is of this class; and one great element of value in his writings is that he has so powerfully and persuasively illustrated them. To take one illustration only, he has shown with a sublime effort of fancy in his poem *Christmas Day* how the bitter feud of Catholic and Protestant, and perhaps the still bitterer feud of two extremes of Protestantism, typified by Zion Chapel and the lecture-room at Göttingen, are reconciled by the Divine love, working in and through all.

To apply the same principles to the study of human nature. We early learn to classify mankind as good and evil, saints and sinners; and we take it for granted that somewhere about the world a pure good is to be found ever sharply opposed to evil. It is not until we have discovered by experience that these abstractions have life only in our fancy, and that utterly good men and absolutely bad men do not exist, that we are prepared to listen to the mystic or deeper teacher, who tells us that in

life good and evil lie in an inextricable embrace, that hate is but a mask of love, and so on. There is no doubt a mystic vein in every one of us. In certain flashes of better insight the dullest person discovers that his estimates of life and its possibility for every man are shallow and erroneous; but he forgets and falls back to his old repellent and repulsive attitude. It is the business of the great teacher to fix our minds upon the deeper truth, and, line upon line, precept upon precept, reiterate it so that it assumes at last its due importance. Such an habitual view of human nature as Browning has taught is indeed rare, as every genuine form of religion is rare. We must say with Paracelsus in a noble passage:

"In my own heart love had not been made wise
To trace love's faint beginnings in mankind,
To know even hate is but a mask of love's,
To see a good in evil, and a hope
In ill-success; to sympathize, be proud
Of the half-reasons, faint aspirings, dim
Struggles for truth, their poorest fallacies,
Their prejudice and fears and cares and doubts;
All with a touch of nobleness, despite
Their error, upward tending all, though weak,
Like plants in mines which never saw the sun,
But dream of him, and guess where he may be,
And do their best to climb and get to him."¹

And when we come to our *Pisgah*² we cannot expect to see more than the poet has seen:

"How I see all of it, Life there outlying!
Roughness and Smoothness, Shine and defilement
Grace and Uncouthness, One reconciliation.
Orbed as appointed, Sister with brother,
Joins, ne'er disjointed, One from the other,
All's lend and borrow; Good see wants evil,
Joy demands sorrow, Angel needs devil!

* * * * *

Man—wise and foolish, Lover and scorner,
Docile and mulish,—Keep each his corner!
Honey, yet gall of it! There's the life lying,
And I see all of it, Only I'm dying!"

3. BROWNING AND EMERSON.

Of great writers in our own time, it appears to me that Browning has most affinity with R. W. Emerson, confessedly the foremost man of American letters. Emerson too was a mystic, but more of the Oriental type. Although the manner is entirely different, they have echoed one another in many sayings upon the great themes of life and thought. A comparison of them would, I think, furnish a very interesting paper.

¹ p. 195; cf. *Sordello*, p. 103; *Fifine*, *passim*.

² *Pacchiarotto*.

Meantime let me cite the following passage, which may amuse by a certain applicability to Browning. Speaking of the great mystical teachers of the ancient world, Emerson says, "What marks the elevation of their thought and has even a comic look to us, is the innocent serenity with which these babe-like Jupiters sit in their clouds, and from age to age prattle to each other and to no contemporary. Well assured that their speech is intelligible, and the most natural thing in the world, they add thesis to thesis, without a moment's heed of the universal astonishment of the human race below, who do not comprehend the plainest argument; nor do they ever relent so much as to insert a popular or explaining sentence; nor testify the least displeasure or petulance at the dulness of their amazed audience. The angels are so enamoured of the language that is spoken in heaven, that they will not distort their lips with the hissing and unmusical dialects of men, but speak their own, whether there be any who understand it or not."¹

Much of Browning's poetry may be described in his own words as "the muttering of angels of some thing unguessed by man."² Yet he has nothing of the ascetic. He is not like Plotinus, of whom his disciple Porphyry said that he never knew a man who was so ashamed of having a body. But we may say of him, in the words of the same philosopher, that he is "good, gentle, and mild; further, that he is a man awake and active, and of pure heart, ever striving towards the Divine, which he loves with his whole soul; that he uses all means to become free from the earthly, and to escape the bitter waves and the ensanguined life here below." He is always real and human. He delights to rise from the low ground of common earthly fact to the heights of idealism, and to extract from relations that appear repulsive on the surface the beauty and eternal truth disguised in them; to wring a spiritual joy out of the heart of human sin and pain. I am ill acquainted with several of Browning's later works. I have heard it objected that he has dealt with painful subjects. All I can say is, from what I do know of Browning's works, I am firmly persuaded that he has touched upon no subject for the sake of "sensation," or of exhibiting a *tour de force*. I am quite content, with the evidence of what I know, that a truer man, and an artist of loftier intent, does not exist. Comparing his last with his first, we must say with loving admiration, *Qualis ab incepto*!³

All the poet's readers must be well aware, and the point has been clearly brought out in several papers, that he has had from the first distinct didactic purposes in view in his work. But he is never didactic

¹ *Essay on Intellect*.

² *Pauline*, p. 18.

³ Cf. *Sordello*, pp. 169, 203 *sqq.*, and the profoundly pathetic Prologue to *Pacchiarotto*, Prologue and Epilogue to *Fifine*, &c.

in the sense in which what is commonly understood as didactic poetry is disliked. He does not deal in naked abstractions, for which he considers that prose is the proper mode of expression.¹ He is didactic in the same sense in which Nature is didactic, and human life, and all parables which employ the natural and human as a vehicle for the spiritual and Divine. Many of his poems are enigmatic and difficult simply because they reflect certain aspects of the great enigma of life on which he is ever gazing. Every fact of human life, every story of human passion, means to him much more than it seems and means on the surface, or as an isolated fact or story. One fact about a man's character leads to the whole; one great modern myth like that of *Don Juan* represents, or may be made to represent, the whole passionate striving of the masculine mind after Truth, through its deceptive and illusory to its truer forms, contrasted with the loyalty of the feminine mind to one shape, one star. *Fifine at the Fair* is, as I understand it, an evolution of the meaning hidden in the parable of *Don Juan*, which great geniuses treated before Browning, but left to him to educe the most magnificent spiritual meaning from. And where he has shown so much boldness and comprehensiveness of thought is in discovering the truth of human nature in the very heart of its vices. The vice is the caricature of the virtue; and in his very capability for vice the man shows his capability for the counterpart. A failure of energy in vice implies a corresponding failure in virtue; and as we can see nothing clearly except by contrast with its opposite, so the poet exhibits the highest ideals of life under their counterfeit semblance. I believe that so far from Browning being open to censure for having selected painful subjects, the fact rather bespeaks an intense earnestness and courage, and a consistency with every canon of art. This oblique mode of teaching, defended by the poet himself,² demands of course an intellectual exertion on the part of the reader, and we have reason to be thankful to the writer who demands and presupposes such exertion.

4. CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY.

At the close of a paper like the present is hardly the place to speak of that system of religious and ethical ideas which may be without great difficulty extracted from Browning's writings. And where the manner of statement is so original and distinct, we can hardly draw out those ideas in a series of propositions without doing injustice to Browning's comprehensiveness. It is as true of him as of his Sordello, that he cannot seize any one portion of the truth without deriving from it the whole. "His hand, so strong, will twitch in the least the root-

¹ *Transcendentalism*.

² Cf. Ring and Book; Prof. Corson.

strings of the Whole."¹ If we take any one of those central truths which are constantly iterated and brought into the most luminous emphasis in his pages, such as the truth that Life is a Probation, or that "Love is the only good in the world,"² it will be found that it leads us by a logical cogency into the heart of his theology. I may (I think) say that the substance of that theology was set forth certainly with much less profundity, but in a more popular form, in the graceful eloquence of the lamented Stanley; also by the rare poetical and critical genius of Mozley. In one sense there is nothing new to be said about these highest subjects; in another sense the great theological truths require to be re-stated and presented in a fresh light to each successive generation. Truths that have been left in the background need to be brought into the foreground; those which in the inertia of popular thought have degenerated into phrases or abstractions, to be afresh filled with the colour and life that personal conviction alone can impart; a new distribution of light and shade has to be introduced into the whole picture of our relations to the supersensual world. This has been Browning's task. The high lights, the deep shadows, and the breadth of his treatment of religious subjects demand and will reward the most patient study. Unfortunately, such a theologian as Browning is phenomenal in England, where for a long time, it is said, theology has ceased to be cultivated in its highest branches by our most powerful intellects; the consequence of which may be seen in the superficial way in which Christianity is both attacked and defended.

Browning has taught that Christianity is no matter of antiquarian pedantry or of historical perspective. He has brought us back to the old lesson that "the word is nigh us, even in our mouth and in our heart." Christianity is a system of ideas operative and ruling over the conscience of men now. Men must have a religion; and no other is possible for us except the Christian religion, which includes within it every spiritual ideal of the true, the beautiful, the good. And it can never be opposed, except by wickedness or ignorance. The truth that the Divine Being is both unknown and known, self-concealed yet self-revealed, that the human heart demands as the Object of its infinite love a Being who is at once incomprehensible and mediatorial known, this is one of the themes which Browning has treated with the most tender and solemn pathos. In the agony of Sordello's trial the poet exclaims:

"Ah my Sordello, I this once befriend
And speak for you. Of a Power above you still
Which, utterly incomprehensible,

¹ *Sordello*, p. 66.

² *Flight of the Duchess*; cf. *Fifine*.

Is out of rivalry, which thus you can
 Love, tho' unloving all conceived by man—
 What need! And of—none the minutest duct
 To that out-nature, nought that would instruct
 And so let rivalry begin to live—
 But of a Power its Representative
 Who, being for authority the same,
 Communication different, should claim
 A course, the first chose and this last revealed—
 This Human clear, as that Divine concealed—
 What utter need!"

Let this be compared with that sacred effusion entitled "Fears and Scruples" in *Pacchiarotto*. From *Pauline* down to his latest swan-songs, if we must begin so to speak, the same lowly evangelical tone runs; the same sense, amidst all display of strength and consciousness of freedom, of the frailty and dependence of human nature on the Power and Love of its Maker and Redeemer. In the remarkable *Epilogue* to Vol. vi. he shows how idle is that habit of thought which fixes the revelation of God to mankind to place and time of the past. Each soul, becoming in turn the centre of the Universe, may read anew the revelation of the Being who knows and feels for us, as distinctly as He can be known by the historic imagination. In other words, God is incarnate now to faith and love as fully as He was in any age of the past. The closing paragraphs of *Fifine* may be viewed as an expansion of 1 Cor. xiii. I do not think there can be much danger of Browning's writings being made a sectarian battle-ground amongst us. His conceptions are far above the extreme and partial views which prevail. Whatever differences of opinion exist, or are fancied to exist, among us, I believe there is one criticism on our poet in which all will agree; and that is, that he has done our hearts good. And this is the best criticism, for it is appreciation. In other respects, Time is the only critic. I confess I have often thought of the poet's lines and applied them to himself, where he speaks of

"mighty works which tell some spirit there
 Hath sat regardless of neglect and scorn,
 Till, its long task completed, it hath risen
 And left us, never to return, and all
 Rush in to peer and praise when all in vain."¹

Absit omen! Mr. Carlyle, the beloved friend of Browning, once uttered the dictum, "Close thy Byron, open thy Goethe!" We, I presume, in this Society desire to close the pages of none of those great poets who have spiritually enriched this our island of poets, but shall rejoice if anything we say and do here shall lead the younger among us

¹ *Pauline*, p. 8.

seriously and earnestly to "open their Browning," and keep him open. To wrestle with his pages is a fine gymnastic of the intellect, and there is moral blessing in the society of the gentle and mighty heart that throbs behind them.

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